There is no frigate like a book to bear you lands away
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THELMA TODD

To Thelma -

'Do you know that your
thots rule your life?
Be they pure, or impure
in the strife -
As you think - so you are -
And you make or you
mar
Your success in the world
By your thots -"

And so - start
thinking right!
Lovingly -

(PATSY Kelly)

Catalina
7/29/

Mid-channel

MID-CHANNEL

An American Chronicle

By

Ludwig Lewisohn

Author of "UPSTREAM," "THE ISLAND WITHIN," Etc.

BLUE RIBBON BOOKS

New York

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THE AUTHOR of this book, as readers of *Upstream* will remember, was born in Germany in the eighteen-eighties, came to America with his parents in 1890 and received at school, college and university a one hundred per cent American education which started him in life with an almost conventional American outlook. Rejected as a teacher of the native literature on account of his race, he took first to writing, and later to teaching German literature at two American universities. Correctly suspected of pacifism and cultural German sympathies during the War, he found himself jobless again until he joined the staff of the *Nation*. This congenial position he left in 1924 and has since then devoted himself wholly to literary work and to the cause of his people. He has written for more newspapers and magazines than he can remember, translated or edited more than twenty volumes, and is the author of the following books:

Criticism

THE MODERN DRAMA
THE SPIRIT OF MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE
THE POETS OF MODERN FRANCE
THE DRAMA AND THE STAGE
THE CREATIVE LIFE
CITIES AND MEN

Autobiography and Public Affairs

UPSTREAM
(REVISED EDITION[1])
ISRAEL
MID-CHANNEL

Fiction

THE BROKEN SNARE
DON JUAN
THE CASE OF MR. CRUMP[2]
ROMAN SUMMER
THE ISLAND WITHIN[3]

[1] German translation by Thea Wolf. Frankfurter Sozietäts-Druckerei.

[2] German translation by Anna Kellner. München: Drei-Masken Verlag. French translation by Jacques Calmy. Paris: Plon-Nourrit.

[3] German translation by Gustav Meyrink, Berlin: Paul List Verlag.

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Epistle Dedicatory

To Louis E. Asher, *Esq.*,
of Chicago, Ill.
Dear Louis:

Every writer, beset by the difficulties of his calling, must often have hoped to find two friends: one who could thoroughly understand his work; gifted with the most sensitive appreciation; another whose sagacity in the things of the world might be a source of help and counsel. Having had the good luck to find these two friends united in the single person of yourself, I am most happy to take this opportunity of signing myself

Very gratefully and affectionately yours,

Ludwig Lewisohn

Prefatory Note

THE wise Greeks declared Memory to have been the mother of all *the Muses and Goethe called his autobiography* Dichtung und Wahrheit, *Poetry and Truth. The difference between what we call fiction and what we call autobiography is superficial rather than profound. Both are forms of narrative in which experience is reëxpressed in an intelligible and timeless form for the sake of a keener delight and a higher significance than are found in the unorganized welter of the world. The "I" that speaks in the autobiographical form is less a person than a symbol; or, rather, it is an inextricable blending of a person and a symbol, of a man and mankind, of the concrete and the universal. In brief, autobiography is not a method of reporting but a form of Art.*

LUDWIG LEWISOHN.

Paris, May 31, 1928

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Chapter One: Journeys End

I

THE landscape of youth is eternal in the mind. True love of country, which evil forces turn to evil issues, arises from that early establishment of a harmony between the soul and the world. Thus my thoughts turn, with an affection over which time has no power, to American autumn forests, to the more than Italian blue of those western skies, to a magnolia tree dark behind an old Charleston wall, to groves on the Hudson uplands, to frosted branches glittering beside a Wisconsin lake, to precipitous roads traveled by a car winged and immortal—for were not you there with me, Thelma?—among the mountains of Vermont. Neither the Alps at Innsbruck, nor the cypress-groves of Fiesole, nor Mentone turning its thousand flowers to the sea, nor even the desert to which I feel an ancestral attachment is so close or native to my heart. It was this circumstance, I suspect, that caused our people in former ages to return to regions from which they had been expelled with every rigour of cruelty and contempt. The world is wide, but the human heart is deep and there is a poetry in early and familiar beauty that we cannot recapture nor replace. To the creative mind this tenacious union with landscape has a very special import. It will help to determine both the moral and the plastic character of a man's work;

it shapes both vision and style. The normal human life is one that finds itself instinctively united with landscape, speech, and folk. The artist, moreover, needs this normal beginning even more than the inexpressive man. A conflict, subtle, far-reaching and confusing, arises when this immediate passion for the land is unaccompanied by an instinctive community of feeling and perception with the native folk.

I begin with these reflections, to which I shall return, in order to mark the fact that America held for me definite and strong elements of a homeland when, at the end of the World War, life could be resumed with less agitation and with more hope. With more hope, in spite of the immeasurable horror of the catastrophe. For until it came I had, like millions of my fellows, been living in a fools' paradise, without a jot of insight into the true character or trend of our civilization. Now one knew. One knew the worst. One saw the destructiveness of mechanical progress accompanied by a stagnation of the spirit, of a master-class blinded and maddened by its own brute power, of a religion which could become the servant of murder, of an idealism that sold out to a catch-word and the beating of a drum. It was clear—the wild temerity of the thought heartened one by its challenge—that the world needed to be rebuilt after another pattern of thought and aim, that the very sources of men's emotional responses needed to be changed and nearly all fundamental traditions to be reversed. War had to be stripped of romance and the State of venerableness, and conduct of those no longer disciplinary repressions which make for dangerous and unguided emo-

tional upheavals. In itself, of course, any individual's share in this gigantic task was trifling. But many men in many parts of the world were addressing themselves to it and one felt glow and hope from this far-flung co-operation. It was in this spirit that I vigorously enjoyed—far less, of course, than I might have done on account of circumstances to be narrated presently—my work as one of the associate editors of the *Nation*. I was primarily the paper's dramatic critic. But I also wrote many editorials and many book reviews. And whatever the subject or the hour I tried to ally my writing on life or on its expression in literature with what I then conceived and still conceive to be the necessary aim of every responsible mind, namely, the liberation of mankind from those superstitions, the subtle as well as the gross, which lead to cruelty. Work was the more agreeable because my colleagues on the *Nation,* a very charming and gay and brilliant group, had all come independently to more or less similar conclusions. Oswald Garrison Villard did not share the moral radicalism of his younger colleagues. But he respected the conclusions he could not accept and I record, with a lively sense of the rare mental and human qualities involved, the fact that in the many hundreds of articles I wrote for the *Nation* not a syllable was ever changed or expunged by the owner and editor. Hence I owe the existence of the greater part of several books—*The Drama and the Stage, The Creative Life, Cities and Men*—to Villard's really magnanimous editorial policy. . . . The pathos of distance is beginning to gather for me now about the image of that bright room on Vesey Street with its window overlooking St. Paul's Churchyard in which the edi-

torial conferences of the *Nation* were held. Over that scene, too, still broods the faint memory of distresses which, brought over from earlier confused and tragic years, literally tarnished my sunlight and withered for me the very leaves of spring.

II

But something ailed me aside from these personal distresses. And this second element, though private enough too as my pain and my frustration, transcends the personal and reaches the very core of American life. It was all very well to sit in theatres on first and second nights and to write articles and editorials which were mentioned and quoted and gave me a position of some influence and authority in New York. It was very well, too, and soothed the inner man to write all these things with scrupulous sincerity and with a clean conciseness that introduced a moral element into the very texture of my work. It was all very well. But it was not enough. I was tempted to ask my friends: How do you live from within outward? From what ultimate satisfactions do you derive your poise, your power, your courage in the face of this apparently empty universe, of age, of death? Mencken came with his gentle, blue-eyed belligerency, bubbling with cheer over the imbecility of mankind. *Main Street* appeared and an article of mine helped to start it on its amazing career, and Sinclair Lewis rushed uptown to see me. Fifty thousand copies had been sold. Did I think it would go on? And slightly drunk on both liquor and triumph he sketched the Babbitt

saga. His long pink face was like a torch. He played with his unparalleled mimetic gift as a Japanese juggler plays with ivory balls. I could not put my question. It would have glided from those happily glittering surfaces. I could not put my question at the house of my publisher when on his birthday the terrific punch made the lights spin like wheels, nor at Algonquin luncheons, nor quite—though here it would have been a trifle less grotesque—at meetings of the directors of the Theatre Guild. My colleagues on the *Nation* would not have thought my question so absurd. They would have given me answers that were neither shallow nor irrational. But I knew that those answers would not instruct me. For my friends had both love and children and were identified not only by landscape and speech but, in spite of their radicalism, by fundamental instincts with the American folk and its ways.

The bright and busy life in the theatrical and literary circles of New York was not favourable to meditation. One rarely reached that mood. And I who needed it most reached it perhaps least of all. For I had not only to resist the forces of the market-place but a more subtly distracting force. There are men who can live lightly, who can escape in those light passions that are like tents for a night or for a week of nights. I envied my friends who could do that and not awaken from the brief glow and forgetfulness to an even bleaker day and to the question: And now? And now? Another series of articles, of parties? And then? I tried the solace and sublimation of more strictly creative work. Had I not, in my earliest youth, started out as a writer of verse and of stories? Impossible.

The sources were sealed never, I then feared, to be reopened. Morning brought me no beauty and night no comfort. My longings for things both in time and beyond could not even freely unfold themselves as longings. A heavy blunt discomfort of both body and mind weighed upon me and I saw the people upon my scene of life in the guise of puppets going through the vain and awkward motions of a show that had no aim, no aspiration, no binding to God or man, no coherence or meaning or health or wholeness. Some day the bones of each puppet would be thrust into a wooden box. A fear of death came upon me—not of death as a cessation of life but as loss, emptiness, futility.

To many people this will seem romantic and even sentimental. A bright young critic accused me the other day of being the last romanticist in view. I think the nomenclature ignorantly chosen. I admit what seems to him and many minded like him my simplicity, my—if he likes—uncomplicatedness. I cannot substitute complicatedness for both aim and form. I was persuaded that the lives of most of my friends and also my own were lives that had no form in the sense in which we use the term in art. There was chaos, because there was neither trend nor bound nor any shaping inner principle. Ambition was not enough, nor skill, nor pleasure, nor even a devotion to good causes. The coherence I wanted lay deeper. Something to dwell with in hours of utter stillness, something to free the mind from a too complete slavery to fortune, something to sustain me if all the lights of Broadway were to go out and no more printed matter were to appear and all our wonted trades and excitements and rivalries and petty triumphs were to

be engulfed by some unimaginable wave of darkness. An old old cry, doubtless, this cry of mine after a principle of coherence. Yet I come back to that phrase as to a sane and philosophical one. For what I wanted could not be religious in the older sense of a fixed faith in anything extra-mundane. It could not be, at least from my point of view, a passionate adherence to any economic or sociological doctrine. I thought I knew whither the world-process was slowly tending. But even if that process required my doubtful aid it could not fill my heart. Yes, heart. Beyond the hard-boiled generation of my immediate juniors I uphold the eternal needs of the human heart. What was it that I sought? What was my lack?

III

For the first time in those days I kept a diary. Fragments of it retain the note and savour of decisive months. . . . "It will not be long before I shall have said everything I have to say about the drama. My contribution to dramaturgic theory, such as it is, will have been made. Nothing will be left but to repeat in regard to new specimens of a few fairly constant varieties of plays what I have said before. In another year or two I shall be finished as a dramatic critic. The thought oppresses me. Already I begin to find myself saying the same thing over again in other words, trying to freshen the same handful of ideas by ironic humour or picturesque digression. Well, what of it? Neither George Nathan nor Stark Young nor Alex Woollcott has a greater fund of ideas than I and they will merrily rule

their little empires till extreme old age brings them a quiet ending. And they will make more and more money and become better and better known and no one will even observe that they're twanging for the thousandth time the same old string. I am evidently incurable idealist or—donkey. Already I feel that I am selling shoddy—my original bits of good material shredded and rewoven into dishonest stuff. Dear O. G. V. with a most elegiac look in his blue eyes said to me yesterday: 'How long will we be able to keep you anyhow?' If he only knew. Suppose a better paid job on a daily were to be offered me. With what face could I accept it? My good liquor is poured out; I can't take more money for the endless rinsings of my cup." . . . "A curious scene last night in the lobby of the Neighborhood Play-house. Smoking a cigarette between the acts. Little J. T., quite adorably little and blonde and lithe, came to thank me for a line I'd given her acting in a recent play. She leaned against me and her hair touched my cheek and she deliberately breathed into my face and slipped a card with her address into my hand. Of course, the towering ogre glared. I looked about and saw a number of familiar eyes on the scene and marked in a flash that my situation was much better known and understood in New York than I had imagined and that a good deal of quiet sympathy was going out toward me. Well, why don't I go to see J. T.? I am starved for love and grace and charm. If I had an affair with J. T. I should become fond of her and, in a measure, take her into my heart. But that would only puzzle and annoy her. I've seen such things. I'm better off as I am. All or nothing." . . . "All or nothing. That's

my trouble in life and in literature. I want clean situations always, ultimate decisions, the edge of eternity. I want God—the absolute. There is none. Very well. Then something to take his place: permanent values somehow embodied and so to be served. And it is for this reason that a man should have children to perpetuate in the world the values created by his ancestors and by himself. Is there not any one busy building a *Civitatem Dei*—a city of God? I would rather black the boots of such an one than have the highest-paid editorial job in New York. I mean that. Yes, the trouble with me is that I do indeed mean it. Hence I shall probably always be poor and in hot water." . . . "I'm sick of Puritan-baiting. Not because I love Puritanism or the Puritan spirit and I've suffered under its embodiment in American law and convention infinitely more than any of my friends and colleagues. What, in fact, has Sinclair Lewis or Henry Mencken personally suffered? Edgar Masters has suffered and perhaps Sherwood Anderson. But they, after all, were directly of the folk and knew what to expect. To me the whole thing is utterly dark. My suffering has been blind. I know as a scientific fact that totem-poles exist. I have seen them. But I am as completely ignorant in soul and blood and mind of the faith and folk-ways of the Puritans as I am of the animism of the worshippers of the totempole. I am, to bring the matter up to date, wholly without comprehension of the state of mind of those many millions of sincere and honest people to whom laws and customs that make for the possibility of such situations seem both rational and righteous. I do my share of Puritan-baiting. It belongs to my hour and group

in American history. But I am sick of it because I, in my own person, have no clue to the Puritan mentality or modes of feeling. Literally none at all. To come back to the most flagrant example: it is wholly incomprehensible to me why there should be any laws governing divorce except such as are meant to protect the economic rights of minor children and dependent women. If A doesn't, upon the whole, prefer to live with B, why, in God's name, should he or she do so? Now when I contemplate the enormous power of sincere conviction on this point among the great majority of my Christian fellow citizens, I begin to doubt my right to bait people of whom my necessary ignorance is so complete. There is an answer: Shelley is with me and John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell, all, if not Puritans, at least Anglo-Saxons. It is a good answer. It doesn't somehow, suffice me."

IV

. . . "Most of my contemporaries and I have a dreadful secret: it is this: Our intellectual life is the creature of a reaction against something limited and changeable and even perishable. We are like reformers whose occupation is gone when the reform they advocate is accomplished. I don't jeer at reformers. He who lessens by one jot the pain and injustice of life is the highest of us all, nor has any really great writer been without his measure of the reformer's love and zeal. None. No, rightly looked upon, not one. But as artists and thinkers we operate upon too low a plane and are the fools of time. Dreiser, Mencken,

Lewis, Anderson, Masters, even Cabell with his escape into romantic irony—how will their work look in an hundred years? The truculent go-getter and the tyrannical Methodist will not last forever. Human types come and go. The artist always delineates the types of his day. True. But have not the creative motives of our group been too monotonous and too narrowly directed? Isn't our literature almost stuffy? Its figures do not stand against the sky. This human adventure is an eternal thing. Of this overwhelming fact I find no hint in all our writing. Not that I am capable of altering anything in my own small activity today. The pressure is too heavy and the tension too great and the involvement too complete and I shall go on—Heaven knows for how long—taking my share in the liberating game of baiting the Puritans. I may have to go on to the end of my days. But I record a perception here, if only for myself. To me, at least, there is something profoundly awry in this whole business. I have a vision of an American work which, not less exact than the books of my friends and contemporaries, shall be severer in character, more timeless in form, more deeply guided by a sense for those values that remain." . . . "There are two sources of the comic and the tragic in both life and art: there is that which belongs to such a being as man in his permanent character, and there is that which belongs to the habits, conventions, and beliefs of a particular age and people. We have not enough of the first in our works and too much of the second." . . . "It is all inevitably, I dare say, in the character of our age. I have been looking through the suave, neo-Latin prose of André Gide's *Les Nourritures terrestres.* 'When you have finished read-

ing my book, throw it away—and fare forth. I would have it give youth the desire to fare forth—no matter from whence, from your city, your family, your room, your thought. And do not carry my book with you.' Such may be the beginning of wisdom. But its end? I cannot but remember Nietzsche's: 'Free callest thou thyself? Thy ruling thought I would hear and not that thou hast escaped from under a yoke.' Have we no ruling thoughts? Have we, strictly speaking, any thoughts at all?" . . .

The doubts set down in these random jottings helped me little. The current carried me on and was to carry me much farther. Like many of my contemporaries in America, writers or not, I was in the grip of Puritan law and custom and public opinion made it almost impossible to escape. That woe tortured me to the quick, it darkened every hour; it took the savour from food, the repose from sleep, the blessedness from memories of the past; it made sordid all that my hand touched and poured its poison into work and friendship. But I conducted myself like an American gentleman, never speaking out even to my best friends, and fought Puritanism and all its ways—in print. Is that not also an American habit—that quaint blending of private conformity and public protest? The American atmosphere of prosperity has made even fairly high-minded people desperately afraid of the loss of public repute, of position, of money. No one has the courage to be poor; no one dares to be an outcast. Yet a handful of flaming, voluntary outcasts might serve as a sterner monition to the young whom alone one could hope to affect than tons of liberal and radical printed matter. . . .

Landscape and speech conspired against me—this landscape which was all that I knew of home, this American variety of the English tongue which had become interwoven with the very texture of my thoughts, the very processes of my soul. I went for a short vacation to the Berkshires. The sober, moderate beauty of those hills and roads, the friendly wayside flowers, the tranquil cattle behind stone fences, the apple orchards dropping their August fruit, all soothed and healed me briefly. But under that brief quietude I knew that this was not my all of life, nor this my entire sharing of mortality. I was then near that middle of the road of life at which Dante found himself in the dark forest that was to lead him to his vision. And despite the almost constant suffering which, less through the acuteness of my susceptibilities than through a long conspiracy of events, had been my portion, I felt strong within. Grey was appearing at my temples, but I felt young. On a brown, deserted road beside the Housatonic River I stopped and listened to the rumour of the woods, to the stirring of the quick wind in the leaves, the sudden solitary piping or trilling of a bird, the muffled roar of distant waters. I stood there and with a triumphant lifting of the heart knew—*knew* that there awaited me love, wisdom, inner power, freedom, a creative rebirth, even though in that year and hour I was still so chained, throttled, frozen within, apparently a free man but in fact the servant of servants. But I also knew that I must not go out, so to speak, in quest of new fortunes. Something in the constitution of my fate, that deep subtle intercoherence between character and luck, forbade it then and has forbidden it ever since. No good

has ever come to me that has not fallen from the skies. Then it is for me to recognize it as good, nourish it, and make it wholly mine by the rightness of my relation to it. Not for me is eagerness, or striving, or crying, or hustling. The inner processes and outer stars of the go-getter are as alien to me as those of the Puritan.

V

There was always a certain cheer, which I tried to feel as more than superficial, about the beginning of another New York season. The city itself is the most brilliant in the world with its tonic air, adventurous weather, and white towers, not only greater but more impressive than the pyramids, cutting the lapis sky. About a New York crowd on Fifth Avenue on a clear October afternoon or at the first night of some play in one of the smaller theatres there is a bone-deep cleanliness, a blade-like vigour and resilience, a precise and effortless elegance that are unexampled in the world. It is useless to try to talk to most of these people, for their speech and even their thoughts and emotions are all clichés. But there is too, a minority with minds, and the whole scene is physically stimulating in its soft refulgence. . .

The early plays of the season were commonly the basest trash. But there were the lights and the other critics, a few nearer friends too, and a general brief sense of exhilaration, and I gladly embraced the deceptive refreshment and forgetfulness that it brought. . . . It is several years since I have been in New York and the chances of my returning there

are slight. But some day I should like to walk along Fifth Avenue again, preferably in autumn, and watch that burnished, handsome, fragrant crowd and, looking south from somewhere in the Fifties, see the towers of the lower city shouldering the clouds. There is no other city scene like it in the world. For all its merely material hardness and corruption, it has a high and soaring note. It has a note, too, that possesses something of the innocence of the sceptical modern soul. For New York is not America. It has no persecution mania and therefore, left to itself, would not persecute. There is no smell of incense there and no memory of blood. I love Paris and I am devoted to Vienna. But I shall be happy to see and feel again some day the uncontaminated splendour of New York. . . .

Among my mail at the *Nation* office that fall I found an invitation to give a series of lectures in a number of cities: Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee and St. Louis. It was the best offer of its kind that had yet been made me and I accepted it very gladly. Not only would the tour be quite profitable but it was also likely to bring a much-needed sense of freedom and refreshment. With two exceptions, one being the Women's City Club of Cleveland, my invitations all came from Jewish organizations: Temple Clubs, Sisterhoods, chapters of the Council of Jewish Women. I did not regard that fact with any surprise. Since the Council, for instance, extended invitations to dozens of non-Jewish lecturers every year, its inviting me too had no special meaning one way or another and I did not suspect how illuminating the experience of this and a number of similar trips was to be.

But to make clear the subsequent character of that experience, I must dwell once more upon the researches which I had been making into my relations to the special world in which I lived and worked. I have said that the great game of Puritan-baiting and Babbitt-jeering did not suffice me. It came, in fact, very near to revolting me at length. The criticism of American civilization, direct or creative, which sufficed my friends and colleagues—even those on the *Nation* staff—did not suffice me. I shall not make the shallow distinction between an actual negative and a conceivable positive activity. No, the problem went a good deal deeper and always issued in the recognition of my isolated position. Their activities sufficed Mencken and Lewis because both Mencken and Lewis have an inner relation to the objects of their criticism and attack. They understand the Puritan and the Babbitt; they are at one pole and the Puritan and the Babbitt are at the other pole. But every two poles are forever united by the substance of the identical world which stretches between them and of which both are an organic part. I am convinced that this image is an illuminating one. Mencken and the Senator from X, Lewis and George F. Babbitt live in the same ethical universe. Is it race and descent that ultimately unite them or the more or less similar historic experiences of their ancestors? Whatever the explanation, the central fact of my complete outsideness from that universe remained. One can imagine Mencken and a Southern Senator or Lewis and Babbitt in the smoker of a Pullman car quite comfortably swapping both remarks and stories. Mencken and Lewis will have their tongues in their cheeks, to be sure. But in a similar

situation I have no refuge but silence. I am completely baffled; I have no clue. I rejoice in Mencken's muscular and fertile polemics and in Lewis's unrivalled *mimesis*. But I have no relation, not even that of resistance, to the objects of their satire and their imitation. The fact came once more overwhelmingly home to me when, some years later, it was necessary for me to appear in a court. I saw a judge in black at the raised end of a great, clear, barren, spiritually sordid hall: I heard men pronounce words. The judge asked me questions and I forced myself to the imperfect mimicry of replies. But to my mind and instincts the question that was itself at issue was totally drained of meaning and the arguments advanced both pro and con were of no relevancy to anything I knew between earth and sky. Concepts were allied, as a matter of course, which seemed to me infinitudes asunder. I may come back to that grotesque story, to those stupid and trivial-minded people, at least in my inevitable vision of them, upholding something they called the majesty of the law. For the moment it suffices once more to have made clear the fact that my inner protest: this is not enough, these activities serve rather to atrophy than to nourish whatever higher faculties I may have—that this protest sprang from some profound difference that divided me grossly from the people of the land and subtly even from familiar friends and colleagues.

VI

There is something heroic in my memories of those American cities which I visited on my lecturing tours. I say

heroic advisedly, since in the lower but ordinary sense the heroic partakes largely of the physical and has its vision turned upon the world without. Of the activities of the spirit there is as yet not a great deal in those cities. But some part of their abounding energy will doubtless, by the mere fact of overflow, be gradually channelled toward the things of the mind. Upon them, at least, is not that dead, grey weight of tradition which makes many provincial cities of the Latin countries—lovely and caressing to the eye as they are—so stagnant and so mouldy. These Europeans are resigned. They have long taken the measure of life's possibilities for them; they sit in their cafés; they delight patiently in the brief shining of the sun. I love to linger among them, for they do not impinge on me and I can pursue my life's long deferred purposes quietly in their midst. Their mood isolates and so heightens my own. But my Jewish soul, the eternally unresigned and Messianic, feels profoundly allied to those civilizations which, like the American and the German, will not leave well enough alone nor consent to a secular monotony of being. Today in America the machine rides us and the Puritan and the Babbitt, incomprehensible but I trust obsolescent types, are in the saddle. Yet I cannot think of Detroit towering with her face toward the North, nor of Chicago, turbulent and menacing but capable of radiance too, nor of Cincinnati with her hills and touch of easier grace, without the feeling that these cities hold a strong hope for the future of mankind.

But the important experience that awaited me in these cities was the Jews who live in them and whom I met on terms of singular freedom and intimacy. Here were groups

of people—many of them of very high and aware intelligence—who were not sustaining their lives wholly by acts of opposition. They did not like the neo-Puritan régime either. But it was not theirs; they felt no responsibility for it; they were not hot about it; they could smile and avoid, more or less gracefully, its too vexatious consequences. They had their own perplexities, their own problem, a problem so intricate and profound that many of them were still groping for a more or less adequate statement of it. Many of them had still only a rudimentary prescience of its nature. But I had gone far enough in my interior researches as well as in my reading to be able to grasp the problem with some vividness and clearness so soon as I came into sufficient contact with those who were living it concretely. Thus if, as some of these friends declared, I had helped them, they had also, by being just what they were, enormously helped me. . . .

Let me give here a brief outline, to be extended and strengthened later, of the first results of both my private meditations and of these human contacts. The well-meant, handsome liberalism of the nineteenth century had thoroughly betrayed the parents of my generation and my generation's own youth. Let us be human, said the nineteenth century liberal in his rosy over-simplification, and let us be brothers. The slogan had a sound so beguiling and persuasive that for many years no one observed either the meaningless abstraction or the glaring fallacy which it involved. There is—how absurd to have to make the observation—no such thing in nature as an abstract human being. Man is embodied concretely in cultural species. The in-

dividual appears not otherwise except as belonging to some species. Both the racists and the anti-racists, the defenders of Nordic or Latin or Semitic integrity or ethnic worth, are injecting into the problem needless, harmful and often meretricious concepts. The species or families of mankind, whatever the principle of their constitution or differentiation, exist. There is no such thing as a man; only such a thing as a Frenchman, an Englishman, an American, a Spaniard, a German, a Greek, a Jew. The loftiest sage, whose works ultimately speak to all mankind, is deeply and inextricably rooted in his historic soil, even as the highest works of the human imagination are forever integrated with the consciousness of the folk from which they arose. Here, as in the realm of natural philosophy, the concrete is the universally significant and that which becomes a universal possession was first born of an ethnic and historical womb. Lear is an English poem, and Faust a German one; the Banquet of Plato is a Greek book and the Psalms are a Jewish book, and from these four books, if all else that those nations had produced were to be obliterated, one could reconstitute the English, German, Greek and Jewish consciousness with all its essential and characteristic reactions to nature, life, man, God. Can one imagine a Lear, a Faust, an Œdipus or a Job produced in Esperanto or Volapük? To try to be abstractly human is to be less than human; we must be brothers as we are—all children of Adam, as the profound and beautiful Talmudic comment has it, in order that no man shall be able to say to another: I am of higher lineage than thou—we must accept each other as brothers with those differences of outlook, instinct, aptitude,

which have been forged in the smithies of historic time. Savage and vulgar natures will make nationality the occasion for hatred and truculence. But that is not the fault of the enriching cultural differences without which the world is unimaginable and would be unimaginably dull and poor. It is the fault of the barbarous and vulgar soul. . . . The conclusion then which my contact with Jews justified and confirmed was this: to rise from my lack and confusion into a truly human life, a life with its right relation to man and God, to the concrete and the universal, it was necessary for me to affirm in quite another fashion than I had yet done the reintegration of my entire consciousness with the historic and ethnic tradition of which I was a part. My Gentile friends and comrades were instinctively integrated with their own. That completeness and assurance could, alas, never be the portion of my Jewish generation. But I believed that, when I had achieved that integration as far as possible, I would no longer need or want to ask: What do you live by? What ultimate satisfaction sustains you? I would not ask. I would know. I would live the secret and it would be mine too. And I may say at once that that belief has proved itself to be wholly true.

VII

Back in New York my conviction did me little active good. It served rather to make more acute my perception of the moral horror amid which so much of my life had to be spent. There is a good deal of that distaste in American life—I could relate anecdote after anecdote—because the

normal instincts, being looked upon as not quite nice, are neglected and dishonoured. A curious mixture of moral illusionism and misdirected feminism has, for instance, put a stamp of approval upon equal marriages. But equal marriages commonly tend, through both psychical and biological factors, to become frightfully unequal. Since women mature mentally far more rapidly than men but also pass the peak of their vigour and attractiveness much sooner, it is evident that a lasting and healthy equality in marriage can be secured only by a reasonable seniority on the part of the man. But that generation of American women which fought for the vote and got it spread the false and injurious notion that the qualities by which women differ from men are not necessary and precious qualities but disadvantages and deficiencies which should be corrected. There are prejudices in the order of nature, quite unlike the always deplorable prejudices in the order of mind, which are trustworthy and venerable and are outraged at our peril. And precisely as my generation of educated Americans have tended to outrage a number of sound biological instincts and prejudices, even so the German Jews of my parents' generation tended, equally through a false enlightenment and supposed liberality, to outrage a set of venerable instincts proper and native to their kind.

My excellent father, brought up on Haeckel and Huxley, fairly radiated nineteenth century liberalism. Nonsense, there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles! What mattered a wrong difference of age between a man and a woman, if their minds were congenial? Exert restraining parental influence upon an adult son? We are, if you please,

no longer in the dark ages! Poor, dear man, I know that he had his moments of doubt, as my gentle mother assuredly had hers. But to express that doubt or allow any cogency to it, would have been to destroy his intellectual past, deny his masters and teachers, his whole age. Every sound instinct was more or less outraged by his blank pseudo-liberalism. Actively it resulted, in fact, in a kind of Jewish anti-Semitism. Gentiles, their qualities, traits, ideals, were always preferred to oneself and one's own. The instincts of one's blood were treated as mouldy Ghetto prejudices. The instincts of one's Gentile friends and neighbours, derived from a strain and an historic experience so different from one's own, were all found bright and beautiful and victorious. One tried spiritually to eviscerate oneself. No wonder that my father ended in madness. I call to witness other members of my generation, descendants of cultivated German Jews, as to whether I exaggerate, whether some of them have not, like myself, had hours in which they have been ready to curse the day on which the magnanimous Lessing patted on the crooked shoulder a certain Moses Mendelssohn.

It isn't a question of mastering the culture of the West. My father and his kind and generation were mastered and destroyed by it. To them it was a Moloch and an idol and they themselves were their own vain oblations. How vain! I possess the culture of the West. That will not be denied. But I possess it, mould it creatively, I trust, contribute to it not as a pale imitation of another human type, but as myself—a Jew. An anti-Semitic wit said of the style of Alfred Kerr: "One can write Hebrew even in excellent—German."

I trust that I do indeed write Hebrew in more or less passable American English. The only gift I have to make is the gift of myself as, profoundly and unmistakably, I am.

VIII

I am deeply convinced that the situation in which, at the period which I am writing, I found myself in New York, has a significance far beyond the personal; it throws light upon some of the problems which human society, if it is ever to emerge from the brutish and savage state of uniformity and force, will have to face. The various constituent parts of every given society will have to face these problems both separately and in common council.

I had come to the conclusion, then, that the greater part of my sore discontent with life had arisen for me not from my likeness to my American friends but from my special unlikeness to them. They followed, upon the whole, their traditions and instincts; I, instead of following mine of which I had long become aware, had been forced to try to mimic theirs and had been thought of as doing well in the degree in which my mimicry was successful. It was wholly forgotten by everyone that the better a man's mimicry of another is, the less human and the less like that other he becomes. The cleverest ape only loses the apishness that God gave him; he never becomes a man. . . . It is decent and human and dignified to live by the instincts of one's blood and one's tradition. It is grotesque and less than human to try to live by mimicking another's. While superficially, then, I seemed to be most like my friends, I was

least like them in essential freedom and humanity. I have drawn much closer to most of them, since I have lived affirmatively my normal and immemorial difference from them.

In order now to rectify my life on its new basis it was necessary for me, above all, even aside from the pressing question of personal happiness, to rectify my personal relations. But this necessary action presented even more insuperable difficulties than I had originally dreamed of, because the American laws governing such matters took no cognizance of my traditions or convictions or instincts. The laws of the state of New York are based on the Christian assumption that marriage is a sacrament whereby the corruption of nature is curbed and bridled, that it ought to be permanent and that the only offence against it that can lead to its dissolution is an act involving "moral turpitude." My liberal Gentile friends, admitting the facts, will laugh. Very well. I observe that they make no particular effort to change the laws. That is their business and it is not for me to criticize them. And in all sincerity I do not. For I have come to understand and respect this subtle and kindly inertia toward even the outworn ways of one's folk. I would not dream of giving offence in either Vilna or Jerusalem by eating *trefe food*. But the human disgracefulness of assimilationism is illustrated by the fact that the Jewish community of New York, the most powerful and numerous in all history, has not demanded, has not dreamed of demanding exemption from laws that have no relation to its instincts, its tradition or its reason. It is our constant experience and the opinion of our sages that the relation

of marriage can and does become a sacred one. All the sanctities of Jewish life gather about the hearth-stone; all our great historic festivals are home festivals. But there never was any doubt in Torah or Talmud—*vide* Tractates *Ketabot* and *Gittin*—in tradition, folk-way or instinct in respect of the initially contractual character or the blameless dissolubility of the marriage bond. But we American Jews, supposedly free citizens in a free state, submit to an outraging of our innermost susceptibilities which the Colonial powers of Europe will not inflict on subject and semi-barbarous populations. The North African Arab must very properly obey French law in all that regards the security and the physical health of society. His intimately personal concerns he takes, as always, to the Cadi's Court. . . . I hear your stormy and outraged question, dear American fellow Jews: Do you, then, advocate the re-establishment of Rabbinical courts? Be calm. I do. Has it ever occurred to you to wonder why Jewish lawyers who specialize in domestic or breach of promise cases are often such particularly repulsive scoundrels? Because they are of necessity utterly cynical in regard to the laws involved and buy and sell justice under them as they would sell onions or tinware. Such is never, it will be admitted, the moral atmosphere of Jewish lawyers who fight to restrain monopoly or to defend labour. These are activities to which Jews can bring the complete assent of their instincts.

A Jew need not be religious in the Christian sense in order to find the Torah and its laws conformable to his nature. For that law has nothing in common with churchly enactments or theological theories; it is the law of his folk,

of his nation. Both our written and our oral tradition reach back to the dawn of human history; they are the expression of what we have always been and essentially still are. A Christian agnostic rightly repudiates ecclesiastical dictates and regulations; a Jewish agnostic still finds the basic portions of our law engraven on his heart. The second notion that has been hostile to Jewish self-expression and self-emancipation has of course been that of the unified nationalistic state. That notion is still celebrating some rather loathsome orgies in the South Tyrol, in Hungary, in Roumania and in Poland. But the very fact that the peace treaties of 1918 included a recognition of the cultural rights of minorities is at least a public and moral acknowledgment of the fact that these rights exist. Nor has the use of such rights ever in fact been quite disallowed, though on somewhat different grounds, in the United States. Observant Catholics are respected for not using the courts in matters of marriage and divorce, Papal annulments are received as legal, and the Quakers' right to non-participation in official murder has never, I believe, been questioned. The Jews, a communion immemorially older than the Catholic Church, have pretended for a century that they have no convictions or traditions or special instincts. That is their shame. No wonder that the individual suffers.

IX

There is a dusty little square on the lower West Side of New York in which I often sat during that last most difficult summer, now mercifully far withdrawn from me in time.

A triangular bit of asphalt enclosed by an iron fence. A few benches. Children of the poor playing under two wilted trees. Opposite stood the huge Y.W.C.A. building.

I sat in that dusty little square and pondered. None of my many friends had had a fate as difficult as mine. Today I revise that judgment: there is one whose life, as dark and nearly as intricate as mine, has not yet attained anything like my later and present compensation, happiness, freedom, power. But I did not know of his exact circumstances that summer, and it seemed to me then that I had been peculiarly singled out by evil fortune. Not in all its forms. My health had always been robust and I had never known the extremes of poverty. I could not, on the other hand, recall a single day of my life since my quite early childhood that had not been tarnished by less or more of moral suffering. Now through the devious ways of thought I had, as I have set down here, come to conclusions which I then believed and believe more than ever to be thoroughly sound. They served to explain my fate. But life, I could not help saying to myself, is not as neat as that. The soundest conclusions do but illustrate or symbolize the concrete even as geometric figures do the actual realities of space. There is something more; there is something else—an unknown quantity, an *x*, in the equation that exists between character and fate. There is a mystery. It is like the element of mystery in art. The analogy, like all analogies, is imperfect; it has the merit of being profound. Whenever I write a book, especially a work of fiction, I am always immensely discouraged during the process of composition. I have meditated on the subject

I am treating for months, often for years. I see the thing completely in vision and feel the qualities it ought to have almost physically, almost with the tips of my fingers, almost as though I were dealing with a medium more malleable and plastic than the worn, rigid, stereotyped symbols of human speech. I proceed to actual writing and the execution seems to me, all during the process, thin, poor and totally inadequate. I writhe and I grumble—humorously nowadays, for Thelma is beside me and life being at last beautiful to me I say: "To hell with art! Let's drive to the Bois and have tea on the *Ile des Chalets* and watch the swans—especially the two black ones with their scarlet beaks—float under the young verdure of the trees of spring." . . . But next day it is the same thing. And I cannot revise or rewrite. To me—I mustn't speak for others—revision and rewriting are processes that may hurt but cannot mend. A work, my work, has to grow from within outward; I cannot reach anything central from the periphery. . . . Then the last day comes. The manuscript is completed. I shed my burden. Who, except at moments, likes to work anyhow? I say: "This time I *have* made an ass of myself!" Thelma, having read and reread the MS., protests and reasons. When the proof-sheets come I begin to see a gleam of light. Something—not much, not enough—but something of the original vision is there, a shadow at least of that inner and outer form which I had seen. How did it get there? I cannot tell. But if there were nothing in my books but what I had consciously been able to put into them during the process of composition, they would not be worth the cost of paper and printer's ink. The mystery, the un-

known quantity, the *x*, demonstrably exists. And so does that other mystery in the connection, the co-ordination between character and fate. Nor is this all. Deeply and subtly those two mysteries are interwoven. For what is a great fiction, whether in narrative or dramatic form, but one which convinces us beyond a shred of doubt of the organic and inevitable oneness of the characters and fates set forth? The artist, however, can produce this conviction of oneness in us by no means that are open to analysis. So soon as he gives reasons he is lost. The conviction in us must be produced by a creative act. . . . But for living men this act has been performed by God. No wonder that the aware consciousness seeks to analyze. . . . No wonder that, during the summer I speak of, in my little square, I meditated on the connection between my character and my fate. There is always, of course, the easy refuge of the theory of accident. I could make out a very good case of that kind for myself: If, on a certain day of the year 1904 a certain teacher of mine had not advised me to go on a certain errand. . . . Nonsense! If he had sent some other, that other's fate would have been like mine in no respect. Character is decisive. Accident and coincidence are tricks of the cheap novelist and playwright. God's workmanship is much more solid and coherent. And perhaps, I said to myself, sitting in that little square, perhaps the only reason you can't discover the connection between your character and your fate is because you won't face the music and admit to yourself what a knave or ass or both you are! I tried to face the music—coldly and scientifically. Yes, I'm an introvert and loathe activity in the world of things and seemingly irrational forces; I am

morbidly, foolishly afraid of hurting people or doing them an injustice. It's like a vice or a disease. And in earlier years—no longer, heavens! no longer—I was impulsive and sometimes shockingly indiscreet and apt to pretend to myself that the crooked was not crooked but straight. . . . Does that account for being pursued by the Furies? Orestes had at least the satisfaction of a good reason why. . . .

X

All human situations and predicaments tend, of course, to grow more and more confused. The simplest is, of itself, so intricate that even he who is at the very centre of it must struggle daily to win his inner clarity anew. Where the factors are easiest to disengage and the moral values least mistakable, doubts, uncertainties, hesitations, blurs can be projected into the situation from without by the words, gestures, glances, tones dictated to others by conscious or unconscious dislike or timidity or defensiveness or envy. In America especially, I fear, that pitiful feeling of envy is very strong and otherwise not vulgar people will, in all that concerns intimate human relationships, subtly enjoy the discomfiture of anyone struggling for a liberation which they desire as well but do not dare to hope for even in their dreams. . . . This morning's mail brings me here to Paris a massive and tragic confirmation of the cruelty and stupidity of American life in this respect. A great and good friend of mine, a man of genius and virtue, is being hounded to the point of madness. . . . I cannot and must not tell that story today, though the day for its telling may come. But

thinking of my friend's fate and of my own I can say, humbly and gratefully, that I was never so hard put to it. I lived largely among civilized people. When the newspapers, led by those of Mr. Hearst, exploited my severely considered private actions with every device of vulgar flippancy and salacious innuendo, a brilliant and charming woman colleague on the *Nation* staff said to me: "Please don't act as though you needed to defend yourself. Nothing you have done stands in need of defence. It simply doesn't." And many months before, having heard turbid tales which at that time she had no reason to disbelieve, dear and wise H. von K. said: "Well, if you are a Don Juan nature, you are. You're not the first!" "Dear friend," I answered, "I am, curiously enough, that less than anything else in the world. Today and in New York Don Juan drinks bootleg gin and indulges in easy sensations. He hasn't even to dodge a duenna or own a rapier or trick himself out in a dark cloak. I am looking for something which is supposed to be common but which is in fact exceedingly rare. Yet that is not a strange circumstance. All the very great and supposedly common things of life are tragically, unbelievably rare. Therefore men embrace the supposedly uncommon because it is easy and cheap and to be found for the asking along Forty-second Street. How easy to scatter bright paradoxes; how hard to seek truth. I don't want prohibition whisky but my share of the wine of an ancient hillside. Love is a hard word to use at all today. For either it is a lie that gilds legality and stagnation or it is the name for a brief sting of the senses or a cloak for neurasthenic wrangling. But love, like a beautiful style, need

not be the less gay and exquisite for having at its heart austere delicacies, sober thoughts, the purpose that allies a union between a man and a woman to the enduring sanctities of humankind. Of course I shall be misunderstood since most people have experience of nothing but irking legality or the naked hunt for sensations. They understand the legalized adultery of a relation continued through social pressure; a minority understands the technique of 'affairs' and will not admit, quite naturally in America, how empty these leave the heart and the mind. Few understand love." . . . The winter passed and that sullen summer drew to its close. But to me the seasons brought no change; time seemed to stand still and a petrified world to tower grey under the steel bell of a hard, unstirring sky. And then on a certain day, in the twinkling of an eye, the stone of the world melted and the bell of heaven began to sway. Thelma had come to me.

Chapter Two:
America and an American

I

DISCRETION is a concept that accompanies a fairly fixed type of the moral life. People who assent through policy or laziness or even conviction to perfectly rigid norms of conduct which they will not or cannot observe, find discretion indispensable. A tipsy Senator voting dry or a pillar of the Presbyterian Church and the American "home" guilty of stealthy irregularities—such people must assume virtues which they do not possess and hence place a high value upon discretion. These are gross examples. Subtler ones, equally offensive in quality, are found in the moral life of very eminent persons. Tennyson was fond of port. It was a harmless fondness, seeing that his faculties remained unclouded up to extreme old age. But for some quaint reason he was ashamed of that fondness; hence the discretion of his biographers. Wordsworth in his youth begot a daughter in France. Since he was ashamed of the action it was subjectively a shameful one and one pities the poor French girl whom he made the instrument of his sin and whom he insulted through all his long remaining years by his remorse, his discretion, his leathery formalism. The recent Stevenson controversy must be rooted in similar discrepancies between conviction and conduct.

All these phenomena of the moral life are wholly alien to me. Since, in my later twenties, I measurably found and

knew myself, I have done nothing decisive of which—whatever the opinion of others—my mind did not in the hour of action entirely and heartily approve. If I have committed errors they were not such in my consciousness; if a higher tribunal, supposing its existence, is to condemn my actions, it must condemn me as well as all the forces, even to the ultimate ones, which have made me. For my actions have expressed my inmost self; they and that self are one. The quality of my life and conduct may be variously judged from without; from within all has been organic, orderly, unthinkable otherwise. Have I then nothing to regret? Have I no hours of weakness to record? I have both—the regrets and the weakness. It has happened more than once in the past that I have permitted economic pressure or public opinion or private influence or treacherous advice to persuade me to an apparent conformity with alien standards and to betray myself and my convictions. In order to be respectable I have more than once fallen into sin. Thus I have been patient when I would have crushed the outer forms of my life as one crushes the shell of a rotten egg, and I paid long and heavily for that weakness and that conformity. But from all this it is clear enough that I represent a type of the moral life wholly different from that which uses discretion to bridge the gap between belief and conduct. Such morality as I have is inherent; I cannot but act in conformity with it. Only the pressure of public morals can drive me into evil.

An amusing though serious enough instance of the psychology of discretion arose in those critical weeks of which I am writing. An influential friend, to whom I was deeply

indebted in many ways, expressed an entire approval of my course of action. But with some acrimony he accused Thelma and me of an indiscretion that could lead to no good. We bore ourselves very frankly, to be sure, though with quietness and dignity. But what need had we, in God's name, for discretion? Time was on our side and health and hope—hope not only for ourselves, but for mankind, creative vision and creative act. Let anyone who cares now or in future years compare the few constricted fragmentary things I wrote during the many years of my old life with the eight volumes I have produced since my union with Thelma. What need had we of discretion, that subtle acknowledgment of shame, that equally subtle homage to opposing forces? To pay the tribute of a hushed and frightened discretion to those irrational forces, both personal and legal, would have placated neither; it might, on the other hand, have made to steal into our consciousness a tarnished or distorted image of ourselves and of our actions. . . . Therein lies the deep danger of discretion, that it may smudge the bright surface of an original righteousness with the slime of the fears, envies, repressions, hypocrisies—the inextricable unveracities and uncleannesses of public morals. There are countries where perceptions of this character are common to a sufficient number of people to create, within limited circles, a rational moral freedom. America is not among them. Even a few quite enlightened friends adopted a brief attitude of reserving judgment. No, Thelma and I could not afford in that sense to be discreet. We had recognized each other at once. We had recognized each other by signs and tokens

and perceptions which were a matter of unanswerable, though at that time not yet definable, experience. Clarity and definition have come with the activities of common living. But the experience itself was immediate and overwhelming. It transcended though it included Thelma's beauty and talent; it transcended my share of literary power and human worth. It transcended, though it strictly included, the fact that Thelma is half-Jewish by blood and was instinctively seeking that part of her spiritual heritage. The experience was there; it covered us as with wings; it welded us together as in an unseen fire . . . Man's future is dark and he must not affront the jealous gods by prophesying. . . . Today, seven years after our first meeting, those wings still hover over us, that fire burns with an undiminished flame. . . .

II

Reactions in life and art when directed against extremes have a fatal habit of again missing the centre. Romantic emotionalism which reached its lowest depth of falseness and slackness during the World War, has produced by reaction a temper in all the arts that cultivates hardness for its own sake. This hardness is not the severity of disciplined strength but a fear of slovenly feeling. Hence many artists omit the element of feeling from their works and keep themselves from sentimentality by pretending to live in an ice-pack. The "hard-boiled" attitude is found not only in much contemporary American and English writing, but also in painting and even in music. In German

literature it is rapidly disappearing. The harsh barking of the expressionists is a thing of yesterday. The young and very triumphant generation of French men of letters, acknowledging no master among the older men but André Gide, assiduously cultivates this enamelled surface of the soul. Painters are frightened of any but technical values; Arnold Schönberg, stripping himself of the inspiration of the incomparable *Gurre Lieder,* constructs his later works according to a new system of harmonic numbers antecedently reckoned out; Mr. James Joyce, a man of commanding gifts and erudition, works heroically long hours in order to propound a series of coldly calculated philological puzzles. All these phenomena are phenomena of flight —from the danger of sentimentality, from the anguished memory of inner wounds; or they are phenomena of substitution, because the painters, composers, novelists, are barren and, having nothing to say, substitute abstract pattern for that form which is the shaping of substance. There are pathetic weaknesses at the core of this whole movement. A strong man may weep. He knows that only an occasion worthy of his tears will draw them forth. A weak man dare never weep, for fear of next blubbering over a pinprick. Thus, too, an artist fertile in creative ideas and images and observations knows that form is secondary in the artistic process, if not in the order of time, then in the order of value. What Dürer started with was the rabbit, which struck him as an exquisite example of God's handiwork. He painted both his concrete pet and an eternal rabbit. He did not start with an abstract pattern or a tone of brown and then hunt for an object in nature by which

to illustrate these. There are new ways of feeling and new ways of seeing, otherwise life would stagnate and art come to an end. But the heart continues to feel and the eye to see; to avoid feeling and vision is to miss everything. . . . It is significant for my age and its apparent immediate temper that I am persuaded thus to defend the dignity and seriousness of a great and decisive experience which lit the sun anew for me and released my inner powers and turned New York, which but a week before had been harsh and sordid and grimy, into a city of unfading beauty and undying memories. The dusty greenery of the September parks was dusty and wilted no longer; it shielded us. The winds of autumn blew upon us from the deeps of a friendly heaven; how white the clouds were and how brilliant the swiftly turning foliage. If birds were few even in the secluded Jersey woods through which we wandered, they throbbed the more quickly in our breasts. No evil things had any power upon us. The world had just begun anew; it was the morning of creation. New York or Paradise; we could not tell the two apart. The seasons, symbol and orchestration of human experience, were not the same old seasons. Snow, which I had always disliked, now showed its pure beauty. Riverside Drive glittered on winter mornings like the grounds of a fairy palace and the innumerable crystals clung to Thelma's hair. . . .

The play of a biological instinct? Undoubtedly. Nor did I fail then or later to analyze the factors in Thelma's past and in my own that made us, in spite of superficial differences, complement each other so happily. It was doubtless necessary that Thelma should have been intensely

preoccupied with literature and equally, in view of her excellence in her art, that I should have been from early years on a devoted student and lover of music. Thence arose the fortunate circumstances that she was able to encourage and fortify my creative instincts from the start and that I was able to introduce her to the work of important composers who had been neglected during her years of training. The magic of our meeting was, then, the flowering of deep instinct and right reason. And so it has not failed us in the work and play, the cares and joys of which all lives are woven. We discovered by and by, of course, that neither was without faults, but these very faults and weaknesses have endeared us more to each other. I am not ashamed to set down this commonplace observation. It was, like many other commonplaces, a complete revelation to me. I had therefore, in both speech and writing, passed a number of judgments which I now repudiate. I am still of the opinion that, except in their strictly economic aspects, marriage and divorce should be as completely withdrawn from social control as religious practice or philosophical opinion. I do not think that happy marriages are plentiful, nor do I think, above all, that a happy marriage is to be had for the asking. It must be tended, moulded, built. But I believe with all my heart that a happy and continuous union between a man and a woman, founded upon passion and voluntary loyalty, upon tenderness and understanding and loving-kindness, is a realizable ideal and is the most fruitful and beautiful estate for such a being as man. . . . But let no cheaply triumphant conservative praise God for a converted sinner. By marriage I mean, of

course, an inner grace. I mean nothing legal or ecclesiastical. Where that inner grace is gone, they who stay together are as abject as they are defiled.

III

Villard and I were invited to be the speakers at a banquet in celebration of the founding of the Menorah Society at Harvard. Together we travelled to Boston and discussed my situation which I had long thought it my duty to confide to him. Both personal instinct and profound principle caused him to take a wholly sympathetic attitude. But he was troubled too and in his candid blue eyes I seemed to see the flicker of a nervous discomfort. He would have been, curiously enough, calmer had my experience been upon a somewhat lower plane and had thus been, even though by infraction, a tacit acknowledgment of the official *mores,* instead of being a repudiation of them. From his attitude, sincere liberal and good man that he is, there came to me a renewed sense of the inertia of even the leaders of our society, who prefer sin to a new righteousness, compromise with wonted evil even to the new good which they approve, who able to think correctly and feel generously cling with a kind of despair to outworn muddled ways of action. An icy wind blows upon them from the region of the unconditioned, the absolute, the decisive command. They are so afraid that the towers of their accustomed world will totter and thus continue to grasp after the snug brief comforts of some compromise. . . . Does the Jew thrive better in the bleak weather of the absolute

because he has in fact no abiding city upon earth? Or has he failed to build him an abiding city because the absolute command abhors compromise, and without compromise you can build ideologies and Messianic kingdoms but not cities of wood and steel under the changeful skies? . . . I turned these thoughts over in my mind as the train rattled on to Boston. O.G.V. was writing notes for the address he was to make that evening. I regarded his earnest eyes, his thinker's forehead, his somewhat inadequate nose. He would stand by me and would not, so far as in him lay, help to throw me to the mob. But his having, ever so slightly, to force himself to do so, would leave a dimness upon the mirror of our friendship. All these premonitions turned out to be correct. . . . It was dark when we got to Boston and we drove to an hotel to get into our evening clothes. We were both struggling with recalcitrant studs when O.G.V. turned to me with his most winning smile. "A man of your artistic temperament will always be in hot water." He had found the agreeable formula by means of which he could remain my friend and yet not be the open enemy of the moral compromises of society. The approaching banquet made discussion impossible. But the remark summed up all that I profoundly and passionately repudiate and scorn. Whether my work is good or bad, permanent or transitory, neither it nor I have anything in common with the scribblers, daubers, strummers who make what they call art an excuse for unguided lives of inner sloth and outer recklessness. I am not "temperamental." The artist, in my conception of him, is the most severely responsible of men. More and more, as superstitions and

theologies fade, he becomes the chosen mediator between man and that interpretation of the totality of human experience without which the spirit withers. The artist becomes priest. The great artist has always been one. The artist seeks the way, lives his truth creatively, moulds life anew. If he does not keep step with his fellowmen it is, as Thoreau finely said, because he hears a different drummer. If he becomes an outcast, it is because his inner command has been to break completely with evil custom or corrupt authority. He never drifts. He is, at every moment, aware, self-guided, disciplined, responsible. He has, as I have shown by my humble example, a quiet compact with either his subconsciousness or the world spirit by means of which an unhoped-for virtue is poured into his work. But perhaps this virtue is acquired by the true artist precisely because he is not "temperamental" or moody or moonstruck. He does not wait for the creative mood. That is the method of the dilettante and the dabbler; the artist summons that mood at his command. He is an artist by virtue of that power within him. That power and the scrupulousness of his execution are the moral elements that belong to his task and his purpose. Nor is his life divided from his work. One is as self-governed as the other. His actions may illustrate a new, an original, an untried principle of conduct. They are never, like the vagaries of the "temperamental," without an inner law. . . . I could not tell O.G.V. that as we slipped into our dinner-coats and drove to the hall in which the Menorah banquet was to be held. But my brain was heated by these thoughts and when my turn came to speak I besought the young men who filled the hall to be

themselves, to follow their inner law as human beings and as Jews, to consider profoundly what each was meant to be and to be that—that and nothing else, to kill the fear-born ape that lives in almost every human breast and to follow the absolute command of inner oneness. . . . O.G.V. congratulated me on my speech. He was moved by it. Yet I suspect that in all realms except the strictly political he was so used to handsome professions without corresponding action, that he never dreamed out of how deep an inner urgency I had been speaking not only to the audience before us but to him. . . . The formal part of the evening was over. People began to move about. From shadows behind the speaker's table emerged a very stout, very dark man. He was indefinably elegant in spite of his ungraceful girth, and his features were singularly well and delicately moulded. I saw very red lips over dead white teeth and under a small black moustache; I saw searching, commanding, beseeching, infinitely persuasive eyes. I heard a husky but agreeable speaking voice—a voice never insistent but tireless with the tirelessness of an inner passion. The voice spoke German of exquisite purity and precision. It was the voice of Kurt Blumenfeld, the leader of the German Zionists, who had come to Boston to see me and to hear me speak. He asked me for an appointment in New York. I was casual, almost rude. I didn't want to miss my train. I wanted to go home.

IV

Although we knew that hostile forces were lying relent-

lessly in ambush, Thelma and I islanded ourselves in our happiness amid the turmoil of New York. We could do so because we had no living sense that these forces had any relation to ourselves. I felt quite simply as though I were healed and free and young again. Thelma's wise instinct taught her that my inner self had never been anyone's but her own and that I brought her a heart as unwearied as though we had been of the same age. Occasionally, to be sure, our devoted friend and counsellor, Charles Recht, felt it his duty to issue a warning against our forgetfulness. It was hard to heed him. I knew, of course, the stupid letter of the law; I also knew that stupid men would not hesitate to apply it according to that letter. But the spiritual distance between us and these men and their law was so vast that the imagination balked at any contact between those two worlds. I shuddered at the thought of ever having to appear in a court of law in this matter because the court, I knew perfectly well—and this perception it was hard to communicate even to Recht—would seem to me an organized mob, a group of insane *pogromchiks* laying foul hands of violence upon things of which they had no conception and to which they had no relation. Any discussion in any conceivable court would seem to be *ab initio* an intolerable insult to Thelma and myself. I could not but be silent. . . . I am dealing, of course, with a weakness more or less inherent in any society. It is not improbable that even in the Scandinavian countries the law lags behind the perceptions and the practice of the most scrupulous and enlightened people. In America, however, the distance between law and public convention on the one hand, and the

minimum requirements of civilized existence on the other, is such that no decent man or woman can help being an actual or potential criminal. A state that forces its best citizens, the creators of its cultural values, into constant law-dodging or law-breaking—it is an open secret to how many American thinkers, writers, scholars this applies—such a state is not, to put it mildly, in a sound condition. . . . Our moral situation, at least, was so radiantly clear that we were exposed to a minimum of personal and social criticism and that Thelma's excellent mother, a New England Unitarian of good Anglo-Saxon stock, soon gave us her countenance and support, a circumstance for which, in view of Thelma's youth, I was profoundly grateful. That support and generous affection have not failed us since. . . .

I was so contented and so busy and, also, at times, so aware of the difficulties that, absurd as they were, had still to be faced, that I had almost forgotten the dark, eloquent face of Blumenfeld. But occasionally it arose before me and with the image came an exceedingly comfortable thought. We had, at last, an organization in Jewry; a group of Jews had at last become capable of common action as Jews. It is this reflection that first drew me and, all other things aside, still draws me to the World Zionist Organization. For, contrary to common rumour and malicious invention, the Jews have been, especially since their so-called emancipation, the most hopelessly divided of peoples. They have embraced local patriotisms, parties, philosophies wholly to the exclusion of themselves as a people and of that people's cultural goods and have always embraced these policies and ideologies with the uncritical

ardour of the neophyte and the wholeness of devotion peculiar to themselves. Passionate Jewish Americans, passionate Jewish Germans, passionate Jewish capitalists and passionate Jewish radicals—the world has been crowded with them and loud with their enmities. I had been hoping for Jewish Jews, united for Jewish purposes deeper than charity, more serious than anti-defamation campaigns. No doubt my profound alienation from common American ways of feeling and judging, which became so clear to me in my immediate crisis, contributed to this hope. . . . Let it, by the way, not be replied that Gentiles are daily caught in the same conflict. Of course they are. I have seen it among my friends. But even while they curse or grieve, an instinct within them understands the burdensome ways of their folk. What opposes them is after all only the codified opinion and religious certainties of their fathers, at furthest of their grandfathers. They accepted their apostle Paul; we rejected him. Hence no ancestral understanding or consent could mitigate my horror, my paralyzing indignation at the thought of an interference with the processes of my life by such forces. . . . At all events I entertained an increasingly happy and consoling consciousness of the existence of an organization of Jews so well and precisely disciplined and ordered that an emissary had quietly come to Boston to watch me as a possible useful member and cooperator. I do not remember exactly how and when a second meeting between Blumenfeld and myself came about. . . . It was the first of many and since he soon saw that specific persuasion was needless, I having long set out upon a road of thought that inevitably met his

own, I was able to enjoy his high sagacity, his eloquence, his incredibly ready spiritual and intellectual equipment. What in truth fortified me at that time was the companionship of a mind which, by its sheer weight and quality, could easily have cleared the worst of those obstacles that the world opposes to the Jew and which had wholly renounced that world and was passionately at the service of its people and their cause. Such a Jew I had not hitherto met.

V

Through Blumenfeld I met Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the president of the World Zionist Organization, a Jewish statesman and so a new human phenomenon. Not a Jew as statesman, like the vulgar Disraeli or the gifted and tragic Walter Rathenau, but a leader of Jews, a statesman without a state, a colonizer without a mother-country, a financier of political projects without fixed revenues or the power to impose taxes, the head and front of the forlorn hope of a difficult people in an impossible land. Well, he knows that the Jews are a difficult people and that, if Palestine were a rich and fertile country, no foothold would have been given to us there. He also knows that his impossible task must in the long run succeed—if not quite as the world knows success, then in some yet undiscovered fashion of its own. *Credat quia impossible est.* Like all Jews dealing with Jewish affairs he has to be both mystic and practical man, dreamer and hard-headed money-gatherer at once. He is a brilliant chemist who has not touched

a test tube in years, a melancholy poet, too, with a touch of elegiac humour and an Ahasuerus, indefatigably travelling from land to land, from city to city, soothing hostile governments, placating his far-flung and intellectually turbulent constituency, homeless between earth and sky, gentle and human and yet unbreakable between the anvil and hammer of our fate. Let it be clear that I am not speaking of the exact policies of his administration. These are debatable. I am speaking of the man, who engages one's affection and loyalty by what he is. . . .

It was soon agreed upon between Weizmann and myself that, whenever my affairs allowed it, I was to travel to Poland and thence to Palestine and, forming my own opinions and with my hands left entirely free, write a series of articles for the *Nation* on the Palestinian experiment of colonizing Jews upon their ancestral soil. Villard, being always the friend of all good causes, was most enthusiastic about the project. I did not know, at the moment, how this plan was to be put into execution. But as I had not been out of America since my early childhood I welcomed the entire project with delight. . . . I relate these facts with some precision because the warmth of my espousal of the Zionist cause in *Israel,* which I wrote some years later, was a source of astonishment to many who were necessarily unaware of the history of my mind and who were afflicted for a number of reasons, all of which I can understand, by an initial prejudice against the Zionist cause. This atmosphere of astonishment touched me once more not long ago when an extremely intelligent and valued friend ventured to ask me in a confidential hour whether

I did sincerely believe all that I had written in *Israel.* I answered that I believed all that and also much more for which there had been no place in the framework of that book. It is that much more, that farther and ultimate ld briefly indicate here at once.

situation that is simple and accessible. between the vigorous Germans on the idiscriminately breeding Italians on the by the spectre of her stationary or dimin- Crude minds conjure up out of this war and conquest and may even invite But deeper than that lies the instinctive desire of a people to persist. For just as ctly speaking, imagine the universe after his consciousness, so no member of any ine the earth as continuing or tolerable ence of his people. And, in truth, to every parochial, all the existent peoples are part of the harmonious and necessary landscape of mortality. I, at least, cannot imagine the extinction of any type of human culture without a sensible impoverishment of my inner self and of my mental life. From such a point of view, at least, all civilized people are good internationalists. They have, furthermore, by the analogy of this vivid experience, a spiritual insight into civilizations which cannot directly touch their own lives and minds and can wholly sympathize with the desire of small and even, so far as they can tell, unproductive peoples not to be unjustly diminished and thus to endanger the persistence of their character and way of life. Now this instinctive desire to persist, to live

on, to preserve its own type of life and culture, of mentality and fundamental custom—its *Eigenart,* in brief—characterizes the Jewish people, as a people, as strongly as it does any other. But since, during the greater part of its existence, the Jewish people has been stateless and even landless, its ethnic instinct of self-preservation has manifested itself not in wars or rebellions or political actions, but through the spontaneous birth from the very heart and womb of the folk of self-preservative movements, of great sweeping spiritual passions which, arising simultaneously in ten thousand breasts all over the world, have been the symbol and the embodiment of Israel's instinctive will to persist as one among the peoples of the earth. Whenever extinction threatened through slaughter or renewed exile or, gravest of all, through assimilation, a redeemer has arisen for Zion. The Jewish people's instinct of self-preservation, of defence against the disintegrating forces of the world, has necessarily changed its method from age to age. The earliest method was the recording of the oral tradition, to the end that men and women could carry with them wherever they went the legal and spiritual foundations of their nationhood. The Talmud was their country. Mystical speculations and even false Messiahs were their stay in days most dark and hopeless. Out of the consciousness of the people sprang great preservative religious movements, of which the chief and latest was Chasidism. Then came the nineteenth century and a new kind of freedom. The gates to the radiant West were opened and the dazzled children of Israel mingled with the nations and the deepest apparent urge of millions of them was to become Germans, English-

men, Frenchmen, Americans, even Russians and Hungarians. Never did the disappearance of the Jewish people seem so imminent and certain. But the old cohesive forces had not withered. Once more out of the depth of the Jewish consciousness arose a passion and a hope and from these a concrete movement whereby the identity of the Jewish people was once more to be saved and preserved. Call that movement auto-emancipation with Pinsker, or political Zionism with Herzl, or cultural Zionism with Achad Ha'am, or the holy way with Martin Buber or, if you like better, the modern Jewish renaissance. The thing exists. No man said: Go to, we will save the people. At the moment of greatest danger the same impulse and the same urgency arose in the hearts of many Jews in many different lands; it is still arising daily and hourly. And I am but one other of that very great company of Jews who in various ways and in many ages have felt the necessity that Israel should live and not die and who felt unanswerably that their best contribution to all mankind was their functioning through Israel. Even as artists, though my opinion of mere art is not high. One has never heard of a good artist who did not express himself through concrete and characteristic modes of being, and perceiving and reacting. Is not even music, the purest of the arts, profoundly tinged by ethnic colour? A good deal of international Jewish art is unluckily not unlike Esperanto. And so it is also because I want my art to be sound that I find it necessary to be myself—a Jew. The creative act, whatever its material or its object, is fed by sources deep in the subconsciousness.

A treatise could be written on art and the germ-plasm. If I contribute my mite toward preserving Israel, Israel also preserves me.

VI

From many memories and many experiences and many hours of thought during the years these conclusions had come to me long before I met Blumenfeld or Weizmann or started out on my journey to Palestine. But I was dramatic critic and editorial writer on the *Nation* and lecturer on poetry and the drama and though more and more aware of the fact that I wrote as a Jew, I had no special occasion to write on Jewish subjects. I recall clearly, however, a group of pleasant people after a lecture in some city of the Middle West who were astonished at my telling them how interesting and heartening I found it to be a Jew because, as such, one was naturally in an excellent strategic position in respect of minority rights, abstention from force, tolerance of all kinds, the very causes, in brief, that the world needed to make it whole. But it was only to Thelma that I poured out all that was in my mind and she and I, at one with each other in this matter as we have been since in all else, began to play with the dream that we might be able to go to Europe and to the Near East together. Alas, for the day, the month, the year, we were imprisoned. I sat in long conferences with Charles Recht, which were alleviated by his devotion, his brilliancy, his caustic humour; there were conferences with other lawyers. The whole thing was literally like an evil dream to me, because it had

a dream's shocking union of pain and unreality. My entire self repudiated these negotiations. What was there to negotiate? And I wondered, as I had often done before, at the pathetic patience of mankind. Or else, I asked myself, do all Americans give an ultimate inner assent to the notion of merely legal marriage as a trap from which none must escape without permanent maim? Futile reflections. The negotiations went on and on; the bargaining and chaffering went on and on. Recht consoled me with a grin over the absurdity of the world. And in fact neither the absurdity nor the sordidness of it all affected me very deeply. Thelma, generously putting aside her studies and her art, made a home for us with that unfailing touch of hers which can turn a hotel room into a haven and a temple. Out of the depth of this unwonted happiness I scribbled one evening a set of verses which, after appearing in the New York *Evening Post,* were at once widely copied and have since found their way into several anthologies. They still express most adequately the mood of our first home:

You and I by this lamp with these
New books shut out the world. Our knees
Touch almost in this little space.
But I am glad. I see your face.
The silences are long, but each
Hears the other without speech.
And in this simple scene there is
The essence of all subtleties,
The freedom from all fret and smart,
The one sure sabbath of the heart.

The world—we cannot conquer it,
Nor change the mind of fools one whit.
Here, here alone do we create
Beauty and peace inviolate;
Here night by night and hour by hour
We build a high impregnable tower
Whence may shine, now and again,
A light to light the feet of men
When they see the rays thereof:
And this is marriage, this is love.

VII

Out of the turmoil and dust of the world I returned to the circle of light which Thelma drew around us. Since memory, moreover, is tenacious of beauty and goodness rather than of their reverse, I came in the following years to dwell wholly in that circle of light. Hence I find it hard to recapture the colour and savour of certain events. . . . In life, as it is concretely lived, that is rational which is conformable to our nature and that irrational which is opposed to it. Thus even then that part of my past which had never established a relationship to my inner self began quietly to fade from my mind. Today any sign of its having ever been at all seems grotesquely wraithlike. A silly ghost out of an evil legend spills a little grave-mould on one's doorstep. . . . There are, then, even within our brief and fragile lives, two orders of phenomena. The rational, to which belong love and harmony and what we have freely chosen, is permanent in the soul; the irrational, all that is inflicted from without, all that weakness or circumstance has brought about, fades and dies as soon

as it is no longer beating upon the actual senses. . . . I remember our rooms, Thelma's and mine, by sunlight and lamplight; I remember our walks and drives both in New York and in the Vermont hills. These scenes and through them Thelma's voice, lyrical even in its simplest speech, are safely mine forever. . . . But the irrational turmoil, the turmoil that had no relation to me and which nevertheless clung to me, haunted me, hounded me, was there. It was curious to observe how the writers on the papers, through no hostility to me, but through their own corruption and that of their publics, managed to cover the whole matter with a thin layer of slime. Men evidently with dead hearts and defiled senses who conceived of human relations only as legal and lifeless or as undisciplined and vulgar. . . . This is worth remarking because it is assumed that the Nordic Protestant masses—for and to whom the papers of the country spoke—are guided by conscience and by a monitor within. Doubtless their ancestors were. Today those masses know only superstition or a whip. . . . We weathered the muddy storm as best we could, being careful to change our demeanour in no wise. I cancelled a transcontinental lecturing tour that had been arranged for me, whether wisely or not I have no means of telling. I record this entire incident not to defend Thelma and myself, for we need no defence. I record it for a possible future in which, I hope, Americans will be able to say that such barbarism no longer disgraces their land. I, in my own person, have forgotten it all except as an outer fact—as fact and as symbol of an order and a society wholly objective and alien to my mind and instincts.

VIII

That society and that order have their easements and alleviations. They have their islands of grace in one or two very large cities, in one or two loosely defined social groups. One can live sheltered on one of these islands of grace and with much prudence and some good luck escape the anger of the ocean and its strong, lurking monsters. All my friends cling to some such island by a technique of prudence and discretion that has become automatic. They held their tongues during the war, get necessary divorces by quiet collusion and hope that their bootleg liquor will not be too poisonous. They jeer at the Babbittry and continue to tread softly. For the super-Babbitts they have an involuntary respect. . . . How sincerely have I often envied them. They have had safety and ease and quietude of mind. But since I have never been able to divide conviction from action, since I have been impelled to live a life of wholeness and of continuity between the inner and the outer processes, I had never for very long been able to keep my foothold on my island of refuge. The iron waves had beaten upon me and the monsters roared at me and no one could tell when it might happen again. I saw no reason for continuing that possibility of conflict, not only because I was sure always to be worsted, but because the conflict was not my conflict at all. . . .

Two worlds confront each other and two ways and two approaches to life. All Christians are converts. The fear of backsliding still hovers over Christendom. Where belief is gone the psychological processes of the old belief

persist. Still the pagan Adam must be kept in check and the new man of Christianity kept at least apparently triumphant. From this original division and this rooted fear spring the Catholic terror of heresy and the Protestant terror of the life of the senses. All Christian ethics are directed toward keeping the original heathen quiet in the heart and powerless beyond the gate. Redemptorist fathers hold missions, and Protestant evangelists revivals. The heathen has to be converted again and again. The doctrine of the corruption of the natural fits the case precisely. Historical Christianity is not conformable to the original nature of the people of the Western World. Hence nature itself had to be condemned and a compensatory salvation to be offered in order to make the yoke endurable at all. And especially in intellectually backward Protestant communities the yoke is most unendurable today and men sweat and groan and commit all kinds of cruelties in their vain effort to live the life dictated by Pauline Christianity. . . . But let me survey the matter from a higher plane. All the finest spirits of the West have in recent ages yearned for Greece. In Greek life and art and thought they have found a harmony, a wholeness, a continuity between the inner and the outer life and between man and his world that were far to seek in the relentless dualism of their convert cultures. For the Greek's culture grew as a tree grows in its appointed soil and under its native heaven. It was no yoke made of the wood of an alien forest. What has been forgotten in the surging confusions of history is that the Jew is unlike the Christian and like the Greek in that his *ethos* too is the original and indigenous one of his blood,

conformable to his instincts, born with him, fitting him, developing with him, continuous in texture since the voice sounded from Horeb more than thirty centuries ago. In the Jew as in the Greek there do not dwell two men. He is not tempted by sins that he has been taught to regard as unnatural; he has little moral ambivalence; he is not tempted to blaspheme or celebrate black masses nor to represent his enemies as lecherous because he envies and yet is commanded to smite the heathen life of the senses. The Jew's moral life is sharply realistic and wholly homogeneous. The senses are legitimate; life is too serious for any loyalty to less than the best truth available; peace and charitableness are the gravest positive command. What is the best thing in the world? ask the Talmudic sages: A benevolent eye? A kind comrade? A good neighbour? A prudent vision? No; the best of mortal things is a good heart. None of the wise rabbis mentioned either "purity" nor an intellectual assent to doctrine. Many, many centuries ago they had come to the famous Kantian conclusion that the only good thing in the moral world is a good will. . . . No, the conflict in which I had been engaged was not my conflict at all. In the severely practical and outer life America offered no hardships. One could manufacture or sell merchandise or heal the sick or plead causes not involving certain moral issues or build houses or bridges or even write or, if one were permitted to do so, teach. So soon as it came to the deepest things of the moral and personal life, the two worlds faced each other irreconcilably. . . . I do not think that this will always be so. Science is still in its infancy, although the Fundamentalist and neo-

Catholic reactions are welcome evidences that both its disruptive and its creative powers are felt and feared. In the slow course of time the scientific view of the world and of human conduct may save Christendom from its inner division, its fear of nature, its legalized moral absurdities and return to the convert peoples of Europe and America some inner harmony and reasonable balance. If that day comes the Jew, provided the diaspora persists, will be able to live more easily among the nations, for the nations will have come very near to his moral point of view. . . . If that day comes. . . . But I, keeping all these things quietly and hopefully in mind, was faced by a practical problem. In the slightest discomfort or suffering on our part there would be nothing rational, nothing not plainly absurd, nothing inherent in the true order of the world. To that order belong love and death and righteousness and aspiration.

IX

Nor was this all. A hope stirred within me that, with a perspective of both time and distance, I would be able to view my American scene with that detachment which draws an interpretative order out of reality and re-creates life by making it intelligible. I hoped for more peace and equilibrium in Europe. The hectic inner involvement would fade. In America I could never cultivate indifference. Hence in America I would always remain a pamphleteer. Not that I underestimated that function or do so now or have swerved from my conviction that sound litera-

ture powerfully affects thought and impulse and conduct. But I wanted again, after the lapse of so many years, to exercise the shaping imagination. My friends and contemporaries had quite naturally forgotten that I had started out as a novelist. Already during one of the last summers in America I had written a short novel called, with an ironical implication of course, *Don Juan*. The little book was not assuredly written under very happy conditions. New York was burning and dusty; Horace Liveright nagged in a friendly way: a book was needed for the fall. But everything about me was dishevelled and ravaged that summer and a great drouth of the spirit was upon me. Either, wretched introvert that I am, I would conquer objective circumstance for once or die of disgust and weariness. My world and life danced feverishly on the point of a spear. Hence I delayed to the last possible moment and then wrote the manuscript of *Don Juan* in exactly twenty-nine days. All art is lyrical or self-expressive in its original motivation and drive. But life, in its growth from experience into art, becomes transmuted into a transcendent form both plastic *and* logical which is wholly separate from the grossness and disorder of reality though necessarily and forever rooted therein. And in *Don Juan,* closely looked upon, this form was not even naturalistic, that is to say externally mimetic in character. Passions are brought into fairly stripped confrontation; the incidents are few, heightened and tinged with symbolism; speech does not halt but is condensed into what each character would have said, had he been gifted with the formal eloquence of his passion and his moment; the form is completely rounded and each

of the thirty sections tries for a rhythm of its own within the rhythmic movement of the whole.

Don Juan met a curious notion of the critics or, rather, the reviewers, that if a man had excelled ever so slightly in one kind of writing, it was somehow all wrong for him to try the use of any other. Thus my reputation as a critic was used against my novel and dozens of reviewers advised me to stick, like the proverbial cobbler, to my last. This showed me that it would be no easy matter for me to gain a hearing for what I conceived to be my true business. Other effect it had none. Current criticism, with a few exceptions, has little knowledge and less acuteness. The artist must be his own severe and scrupulous critic, since no one else seems to know what, in any deeper sense, he would be about. I do not, quite objectively and coldly, think that *Don Juan* was a performance without merit and I can say this the more frankly today since it proved to be the slight preliminary sketch for a later work of very different extent and weight and calibre. As I made someone say in the story: Love renews. . . . Is not that a wise as well as an astute arrangement whereby the Eternal has given to the instinct whose plain and obvious purpose is the continuance of life so many other uses? The right and lovely mating of a man and a woman changes the very aspect of the world, restores lost youth, makes old griefs and disappointments to seem as though they had not been, quickens the eye and step and guides the artist's brain and hand. In this one matter the wasteful universe has practised a magnificent economy. For all these miracles are by-products of the instinct shared by us with the beasts and trees. . . .

X

So we made ready for our exile. We called it that humorously, for we felt that the glow of adventure and experience lay ahead of us. I had not been in Europe since my early childhood and Thelma never. The world was all before us where to choose our place of rest. And, in fact, I use the word exile only in order to foreshadow a later examination of that concept. The final brilliant spring and summer weeks raced by us; I was busy up to the last moment. Rudolph and Joseph Schildkraut asked me to translate Richard Beer-Hofmann's romantic tragedy in verse, *The Count of Charolais.* They intended to star in the play together. I was not sure that anything would come of their scheme, but it amused me to turn Beer-Hofmann's sounding verse tirades into English. I wrote my weekly *Nation* articles up to the actual week of our departure and arranged my modest but intricate business affairs. We saw a good deal of a few friends. Charles Recht, closest of all, took us driving in his car out into the green Hudson country. The shadows of the past faded. Even the tragic memory of my father's and mother's frustrate lives and too early death took on a softer shape in a world grown friendlier. I could think of them with more peace when their photographs and all intimate mementos of them had been placed into the keeping of Thelma's mother. It was as though I had rescued their shades from the hostile and cruel atmosphere in which they had had to dwell for years. Let no one call this either sentimental or fantastic. There is no stronger thing in the world than moral atmosphere. It can corrupt

and stain or bless and revive all things, even the memories of the dead, according to its nature. . . . Yes, the dreadful shadows of the past faded, all and forever. On a brilliant day of early summer we caught a train to Montreal. We were safe from the enemy and safe from the babble of fools. Despite my greying hair we felt like two happy children and looking into Thelma's eyes I thought of the verses of introduction and dedication to her which I had written for my manuscript translation of *The Count of Charolais:*

A sombre tale our poet chronicles
Of evil strangely arising out of good,
So that no wisdom nor yet fortitude
Nor loving-kindness which is more than these,
Nor reverence nor ancient pieties
Could save these three who had not understood
That wildness at the core of nature's mood
Which still allies us to the beasts and trees.

Trusting too strongly was their guiltless guilt,
And their undoing was an innocence
That too securely upon God had built
Its hope of righteousness and of defence—
Desolate against the empty sky they tilt
And hold all life God's jest at their expense.

Others in yet another fashion blind
Will not see human evil, hoping still
To draw the stranger up the holy hill;
They mark not dark intent nor wrong designed,
But with the folly of the overkind
Defile the deep recesses of the will,
And snare their conscience, fearing to do ill,
However clear the heart and sovereign mind.

That was my sin, beloved, whence arose
The sordid fury and relentless greed,

The poisoned malice and the obscene mirth
That would have slain our spring and aged our rose,
Had not our love transcended them and freed
Itself from these indignities of earth—

Our love!—Your gifts to me of oil and wine
And coolness for the feet, rest for the head,
Blessedness for the heart uncomforted,
Wife, mother, artist, priestess at the shrine
Of immemorial sanctities now mine—
Mine who, so sorely disinherited,
Saw woman in the image of my dread,
And the earth withered by her breath malign.

We are together and we are alone
Forever. Soon the sunsets will stream o'er us
And other stars that never on us shone,
And we shall fare, with all earth's fields before us
To where on Lebanon the cedar trees
Stir with the wind of Paradisal seas.

Chapter Three:
Of Europe and Ourselves

I

SO FAR I had written amid a harsh and gusty spring. Such springs have in them the ache of hope deferred. And the winter had been filled with a task that, begun hopefully enough, presented as time went on difficulties of an extremely significant character. In addition, there had been for both of us a domestic duty, delightful in itself but wearying at length. We had not been able to take one of those excursions, longer or shorter, by which we had been in the habit of breaking the heavy middle of the year. Thus I had written a good deal in a twilight mood that brought too sharply upon my tongue the savour of old bitterness and pain. Still the rain poured and a malicious wind whipped the brave candles of the chestnut trees in the Luxembourg Gardens. The lovely Avenue de l'Observatoire dripped and shivered. A steady moroseness seemed to have settled down upon the earth, and we are so intimately the children of this little rolling sphere that our minds are blanketed by the vapours that swathe it. Thelma declared that I was getting stale in mind and that even the black fur of Siki, the cat, was losing its lustre. It was time to flee. . . .

South, then, nearer once more to the Mediterranean, sea of seas, upon whose far eastern shore we once appeared. Do not its waves still murmur echoes of the old majestic tongues that first it heard—the craggy sobbing speech of our

prophets, the full-mouthed, singing Greek and here, on its northern shore, the smooth and stately idiom of the folk that crushed and finally dispersed us? . . . Our first stop was Toulouse, an agreeable semi-Southern city but with a rather dull, provincial hardness. I also missed here in Languedoc the palms and olives I was seeking. In the hesitant sunshine we saw the great sight of the town, the Romanesque church of St. Sernin. The elegance of the Romanesque may sometimes be felt as a relief from the intricate maladies expressed in Gothic. But it is far less interesting because art counts in direct proportion to its eloquence, to the amount and intensity of life which it expresses. A few hours, at all events, sufficed for Toulouse, especially because we had a definite objective—the famous little city of Carcassonne.

The sun still played precariously with black menacing clouds over the rolling vineyards of Languedoc and over the open belfries of its village churches and a slightly sharp wind blew into the open window of the compartment. But when at last we arrived in the lower town of Carcassonne and saw from afar the towers and battlements, the complete mediaeval aspect of the *cité* on its hilltop, all doubt vanished. Here was the real thing, the complete shell, at least, of that elaborate civilization which was destroyed by a black explosive powder and by the printed word—by, after the strange manner of man, swifter death and intenser life. . . . The autobus of the Hôtel de la Cité carries one up the hill, across the drawbridge into the ramparts, through winding, guttered streets and alleys to the hotel cleverly built amid the very towers and battle-

ments, with its front overlooking the tiny square of the Basilica of St. Nazaire and its gardened back looking down upon the lower city and on the fields that stretch on to the black foothills of the Pyrenees. We chose a room with windows over the little square and directly beside the door of the basilica. Fourteen carved heads are over the door; three gargoyles stretch from the corner of the building and were visible to us by night and day. Once the rain poured and the gargoyles became water-spouts and from the open mouths of dog and man and demon rushed the waters of the pointed roof.

We first used the great Porte Narbonnaise with its drawbridge over the dry moat and its massive towers to go out from the city and walk on the grassy ridge of the moat. The tiny and precise daisies and dandelions and the purple "aiguilles" set by thousands amid the sharp green grass reminded me strikingly of the old phrase of "jewelled meads." To the left rose the towers and ramparts; to the right stretched out the lovely rounded hills of Languedoc. Next we discovered the Porte d'Aude and later still a postern gate that led to the green sun-flooded spaces between the inner and the outer ramparts. Here, surveying the country from behind the archers' stations, we gained a new and more accurate idea of the beauty and security offered to men in a wild and lawless age by the strong lords who built castles and fortified towns and of the naturalness, under these conditions, of that feeling of uncritical loyalty to rulers which has since done such immeasurable harm in the world. This is perhaps the most dangerous of the sentiments which, their concrete and beneficent reasons clean gone, continue to

stalk in the slothful minds of men. Thus we still let the arrogant state treat us as though we were speechless and helpless hinds whom one marauder must huddle behind walls to save them from the fury of another. . . .

We lingered for more days than we could well afford amid these scenes, for all has become memory here and the fields and the little walled city live as in a dream. Business and bustle have withdrawn to the *ville basse* beyond the river Aude. In the *cité* on its hill one can really enjoy the pleasures of meditation, one can enjoy that deep, receptive mood, so hard to attain in our world today, in which it is perhaps given us to see a little more clearly than usual into the life of things. . . . I am still away from my study and from all books; a blue estuary of the Mediterranean is radiant beyond the palms and parasol pines outside the window; but I must record—for they are so vivid within me—the notions that came to me with an indescribable force in the dead enchanted city of Carcassonne.

II

They did not come, these notions, from the tireless nightingales that sang even at high noon in the groves just beyond the *cité,* nor from the quiet old Canal du Midi below with the still, dark cypresses lining it on both sides—a scene of inimitably Latin sobriety and grace. They came from the three gargoyle faces, monster, man and dog, that looked into the window of our room and from the fourteen grotesques, twisted embryo, beast in pain, sneering devil with pointed faun's ears, over the door of the Basilica of St.

Nazaire. The tower and nave of the church are Romanesque; the choir with its sculptures in high Gothic. The gargoyles belong to the year 1300. . . . It was in the year 306, was it not, that Constantine proclaimed himself a Christian? From then on, as the rather blank history books tell us, the conversion of Europe to Christianity proceeded rapidly. Apostles abounded; whole tribes were baptized; pagan images were smashed and sacred groves hewn down; only on the wild outer heaths continued to dwell the dwindling heathen who had not bowed down to the cross. One wonders at the purblind historians who are generally satisfied with these empty statements. What is the inner history, the history of human experience, of those thousand years from Constantine to the completion of the church of St. Nazaire? One aspect of that millennial history is to be clearly read in every church in Europe: the nations took the morbid, metaphysical pseudo-Judaism preached by Paul and turned it into a new Paganism with its thousand altars to its hundred gods. But that statement does not go very deeply into life either, into the actual psychical processes that must have been at work. The Christian missionaries cut down groves and cast out devils; they did more; they cursed the life of the senses. And the devils and the five senses rebelled. First they rebelled consciously and the answer to conscious rebellion was excommunication and fire and the sword. Even so in remote woods, on desolate fields and barren hilltops shy pagan fires burned and summoned to priapic rites. But gradually the rebellion of the devils and of the senses withdrew into the subconsciousness and the sculptors who adorned the churches and cathe-

drals of the ages of faith, simple and pious men so far as they knew, covered the Christian temples with images and symbols of all the resistances and pains and maladies and grinning ironies of the crushed soul of an immemorial world in which the instincts of man had known no essential change since the beginning of time. And especially, in the shape of necessary beam-ends and useful water-spouts, they covered and studded them, even as a tree is studded with branches, with dog and man and monster-headed phallic symbols. Everywhere they placed the *membrum virile,* strong but in some aspect of disgrace and grotesqueness and pain. . . . Remember, shocked and gentle reader, that all the thousand sculpturesque details of Cologne and Chartres and Rheims and Notre Dame de Paris and Strassburg were first conceived and modelled in some forgotten sculptor's studio. And in the inner world of the human psyche as in the outer world of physical forces the law of causality prevails. There is no accident. Intimately allied inner processes—unconscious memories, forgotten rebellions and resistances, melancholy repressions and substitutions caused all the sculptors of the ages of faith to speak the same symbolic language and to express the cry of the tortured pagan soul. . . . The moral dualism of Christianity goes deep, inconceivably deep; it goes to the centre and origin of things. It is from this dualism that Christendom needs to be liberated. Protestantism, which cast off the tradition of Rome and its empire and shifted the centre of power to the North, served only to deepen that dualism and its conflicts and sicknesses. For seeking to return to primitive Christianity it clung to Paul. But it is precisely with Paul that

neither Greek nor Jew nor, I trust, the emerging Westerner of the scientific age can ever make his peace. . . .

From Carcassonne we went to Nîmes. The Jardin de la Fontaine is enchanting on its hillside. But I am tired of arenas. From here to El Djem on the edge of the Sahara they dot the world with their brutality. They steal the calm even from such lovely and perfect things as the ivory-tinted fane of the Capitoline Jove which stands in this Provençal city. Moreover the mistral blew; it harries one and gives one a headache. We fled to the Golden Coast and here we are at St. Raphael and the blue of the Mediterranean—*mare nostrum* too—is purging my eyes and on a table in our room Thelma has set her booty: two Chanukah lamps found in the depths of old shops in Carcassonne and Nîmes. How came they there? The strong Jewish life of the Middle Ages in Provence and Languedoc was wiped out centuries ago leaving no trace behind. The scattered Jewish families who live here now are recent immigrants from the Eastern departments. But the lamps are undoubtedly Jewish handwork of some age—rude, fumbling, aspiring, expressive. . . . Here, at St. Raphael, there are besides ourselves only a few English people at this season: a friendly-looking white-haired couple who play interminable games of patience; another couple, grey not white, deep in crossword puzzles; a group at whist or bridge. Most of them drink a good deal in a seemly, dignified kind of way. They all read the *Daily Telegraph* with solemnity. No one owns a book, no one is capable of any conversation except about sports, facts or objective memories. Both ideas and feelings

are evidently considered downright improper. They are retired Colonial officials, merchants, bankers. Their work being done they have wholly become children again and play games. I have seen them many times in many places. No wonder the English have conquered the world. Having no world within, they could not expend all their energies on games. . . .

III

With a mind rested and tranquil, the winter cobwebs clean swept out, I turn once more to the past, to that hot, dazzling July morning on which we caught the train from New York to Montreal. Never assuredly was there a more winged train. Montreal was green with a fresher leafage than we left behind us in New York and it was almost like a symbol of freedom when at the Montroyal Hotel the waiter brought us with our dinner pale ale in a champagne cooler. Another world had in fact already begun. A leisurely horsecab, the first of many in many countries, carried us up Mont Royal. It was a delicious day. Thelma's mother met us here and together we travelled over the French countryside between Montreal and Quebec. Here we took ship. Already our familiar America seemed to lie very far behind us. It was to rise again and again in my mind a hundred times and in a hundred fashions. But for that day I was utterly contented with the delight of freedom. Surely not quite without reason America had in my mind become identified with the pressure of alien law,

the irk of old miseries, the fierce resistance to any rational conducting of life. Or, rather, for America substitute the State, the blind corporate expression of pack-psychology in order to free of any blame and wrong the many minorities, Gentile and Jewish, of whose light and will the machine of law and of brute power takes no more cognizance than it took of mine. Here, as elsewhere it is the State that is evil; it is the officials of the State who become infected with the poison of its arrogance, of its blunt will to humiliate and to crush. Venerable is the solidarity of instinct and memory with one's kin, one's *gens,* one's kind, with one's blood and the spiritual experience of one's blood; the flower of life is the union bred by love and answering sympathies and tastes. Such bonds and bindings, such religions suffice. By their common possession of them men are in truth brothers, each able, if he had a good will, to honour another's sanctities. But the solidarity of belligerent citizenship wreaking, under the loud empty name of State, its will upon its victims, is packlike, primitive, bloody, cruel. I will not honour it nor, except under physical compulsion, obey it at its slightest conflict with my conscience. "I think that we should be men first," wrote Thoreau, "and subjects afterwards. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right."

We did not stay long in England; it was hot and dear and tourists covered the earth like swarms of locusts. One saw nothing but them. Some day we promise ourselves

to see in quietude London and Oxford and the English countryside. That summer, too, I was eager to get to Germany, fatal and unhappily beloved land, whose tongue is as familiar to me as this English tongue in which I write—land and tongue which have played so portentous a part in the modern history of my people. For it was here, whether by virtue of their number, though that was never very great, or by virtue of some inner relationship that Jewish emancipation first became spiritually effective. It is in the lands of German speech that the Jewish genius has expressed itself most richly in the terms of Western civilization. From Mendelssohn and the women of the romantic movement, from Heine and Börne and Zunz on to Wassermann and Schnitzler and Mahler and Rathenau and Hermann Cohen and Ehrlich and Einstein and Freud and on to such minor but powerful contemporary figures as Franz Werfel and Stefan Zweig and Emil Ludwig and Lion Feuchtwanger, the story has been the same. The modern Jew has functioned most powerfully through the medium of German civilization. And yet that civilization has never accepted him even to the extent to which he has been accepted by England and France and, till but the other day, by America. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not want acceptance in the older nineteenth century sense. I repudiate assimilation as a self-delusion and a fraud. I demand of my own people spiritual self-emancipation and of the nation, cultural minority rights. But in regard to the Jew's relation to Germany I record a fact. That land and that civilization lure us into love and pro-

ductivity and self-betrayal more than any other. Is it the essentially introvert character of the German that has such power upon us? Is it his blending of music and metaphysics, his striving after unity and his dwelling in the element of time? Or is it because even in his silliest aberrations something of earnestness and so of wholeness clings to him? Or is it, finally, because he is, upon the whole, the least gamesome and "sporty" and conventionalized of Nordics and thus a little closer than others to our repudiation of artificial values and constructive codes? The question, in any case, has never been properly discussed. The German anti-Semites rave; the German philo-Semites talk sincere and benevolent platitudes. German Jews, so deeply wounded because they have loved so much, are either silent or rave too. Only Martin Buber and his group, from whom I have learned so much, have transcended the whole issue by such acts of creative self-emancipation as I am trying to urge upon the Jews of America. They have left that particular problem behind them. But it is not without its special significance that Martin Buber, whose writings are wholly or almost wholly Jewish in content, is a German stylist of the very first order. He writes German as no English or American Jew has yet written English. . . . Yes, I was eager to be, for the first time since my childhood, on German soil, and Thelma shared my eagerness. For though at that time she knew very little of the language which she was to acquire so quickly and so well, Germany was to her not only the land of music but also of the origin of her father and of his ancestors for many generations.

It was with a genuine thrill that we boarded the Mitropa express at the Hook of Holland.

IV

Berlin lay in temperate sunlight. Flower-boxes were at every window. The terrible monetary inflation was just over; banknotes bearing astronomical figures and worth a dime or a quarter were still in circulation. Everybody's nerves were still badly on edge. That was very apparent, for instance, in the exasperated voices of the telephone operators which, two years later, had become conventionally smooth and pleasant. Beneath taut order and scrupulous neatness a good deal was still shamefacedly broken and out of repair. Our own reception was most agreeable. Our cousins, Arthur and Grete Eloesser, had rented for us the furnished apartment of an absent friend—a palatial dwelling to our innocent American eyes, with a majestic dining-hall, a very good library and a Bechstein concert grand piano in the music-room. The apartment was situated on one of the green streets off the Kurfürstendamm far out in the direction of Grunewald, yet within easy enough reach of the Tiergarten quarter, and it seemed to us both that we had never been in a pleasanter place.

To me the city had, of course, a strange and almost legendary charm. I learned now how preternaturally clear and tenacious are the perceptions of childhood. For the city answered to my memories with an astonishing exactitude. I saw all the old sights again, saw them clearly and with the eyes of childhood and yet across what a gulf of tragic

years. Seeing these streets and parks and monuments, the old gold-fish lake in the Tiergarten, the Brandenburger Tor, simpler and lovelier without the glitter of the imperial guards, the house, too, in which my parents and I had lived —seeing all this I felt with an almost unbearable poignancy the sadness and irremediableness of mortal things. In the twinkling of an eye, between two beats of the heart I lived over again in vicarious vision the early lives of my father and my mother in this dear but somehow hostile city and also the difficult later American years under that heavy Southern sun. And I perceived once more how kinless and how kindless, how broken and how futile all, all those years had been and how their hollowness and emptiness, despite so much human fineness and warmth and distinction, had been caused ultimately by the bewitchment—the word is to be taken in its old and literal sense—exercised by this city and its cool Northern charm and its spirit and music and speech. Thus there arose in me a sudden, profound revulsion against the city and at the same time, even while I trod its streets and gardens, an immense nostalgia for it, and the city became a symbol to me, lovely yet menacing and overwhelmingly concrete—became the temptress who, since the days of Lessing and Mendelssohn, had lured us on and given us hopes and brief honours and always broken us again in the end. I was saved from an extremity of depression only by the dear and inspiring presence at my side. But I knew at once that, though I should always revisit this city, it could never become for long an abiding place for me and strangely, vividly, though yet

unseen, I had a vision of palms and tawny hills and the dark Mediterranean tide upon the shore of Palestine. . . .

Although it was midsummer we saw a good many interesting people. They were all Jews. But they were divided into two mutually quite separate and subtly antagonistic groups. Through Kurt Blumenfeld we came in contact, of course, with the leaders of Zionism and nationalism: the philosophers Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn, the brilliant novelist and sociologist Arnold Zweig. On the other hand through Eloesser, one of the most highly esteemed men of letters of Berlin, as well as through an echo of my American reputation here, we met Alfred Kerr, the famous critic, Bratter of the *Vossische Zeitung,* Theodor Wolf of the *Tageblatt* and other writers and journalists. Among this group of extremely able and agreeable people there evidently prevailed the convention of acting as though they were one hundred per cent Germans of liberal and democratic tendencies and as though their almost complete personal segregation were due to a negligible prejudice which time and the spread of republican ideas would gradually eliminate. They are sustained in the practice of this convention by the undeniable facts that their books are read by large German audiences and that their newspapers are among the most powerful in the country. Nor can there be the slightest doubt concerning their own passionate attachment to the land and speech that are their own and have been their ancestors' sometimes for many generations. My cousin's most delightful book, for instance, is undoubtedly his delicate and finely wrought account of the Berlin of his earlier years: *Die Strasse meiner Jugend.*

Yet it is not clear to me with what inner comfort this large and gifted and powerful group sustains its anomalous position. For it is, with whatever exceptions—and I am quite aware of both the number and, above all, the quality of these exceptions which include Hauptmann and Thomas Mann and Herman Hesse and not a few statesmen and philosophers—it is viewed with suspicion, dislike and disdain by the vast majority of the people of the land; it is, upon the whole, isolated and shunned. And it must, of necessity, deliberately turn its face from the fate of the average Jew who is generally the object of definite exclusions, humiliations and chicaneries. Its drift, of course, is inevitably toward the extremes of assimilation. And one, at least, of the results of this process is, I am most credibly informed, the existence in Berlin of a group of converted Jews, Protestant and one hundred percenters, who, shunning Jews and shunned by Gentiles, associate and intermarry exclusively within their own group. The whole thing is, despite fair appearances, tragic enough. It is also farcical. And its farcical side was brought home to me again the other day by an anecdote not from Berlin at all but from New York, the anecdote concerning the wealthy and cultured Jewish lady who makes it a principle to receive in her salons only such Jews as do *not* associate with Jews. . . .

V

We are, as Schnitzler makes a character in one of his plays remark, a queer enough crowd. And our character

and experience are, in fact, unique in respect of duration and intensity. But our practical situation is finding more and more partial analogies in the modern world and both Jewishness and Judaism have once more a very powerful and exemplary word to speak to all mankind. The permanent existence of cultural minorities in nearly all European states and the breaking down, both positively and negatively, of the melting-pot theory in America, tend to create a number of situations comparable to the situation of the Jew. The idol of the absolute State with its norm-giving master-class and its warlike solidarity still hypnotizes great masses. But the idol is slowly crumbling, in spite of such things as the hectic Italian reaction, under the attacks of all friends of peace and reason, of economic co-operation, of cultural and political pluralism everywhere. Meanwhile, with this process only in its inception, millions of people live at second-hand, uneasily and unhappily; they give up their human dignity and worth; they yield to petty corruptions.

A humble and amusing and significant example. In the beautiful hill-garden of an inn in the Vosges Mountains, a little crowd of vacationists, middle-class people from Strassburg, Colmar, Mühlausen. They are typical South Germans, Allemanic folk, a bit heavy and graceless, but honest, good-hearted and far from unintelligent. They drink their beer or coffee; the women sew or knit or crochet. One watches them and listens to the queer sounds they make and discovers at length that these people, especially the women, are talking to each other in mincing and execrable French. Never have I heard that charming lan-

guage so mauled and mangled. Now whatever the mistakes of the French régime in the recovered provinces, and they have been as many and as stupid as was to be expected from a highly centralized political state, these mistakes have not extended to any interference with private life or personal habit. The unofficial Frenchman is the most tolerant and sensible of Europeans. There was no reason on earth why these Alsatians should not have spoken their German mother-tongue and thus have been natural and dignified and eloquent in the measure of their needs. Their French speaking, especially the women's, was a typical assimilatory gesture, a snobbish gesture—the two things are closely allied—an act of self-immolation before power. Because the snob's and the assimilationist's mistake and vulgarity and sin is his identification of excellence with power. He despises himself and all that belongs to him—like so many German-Americans of the second generation, for instance, —because it is not identified with power and so with fashionableness and with worldly glitter and advantage. Now it really matters extremely little to the tax-gatherer of which State one pays one's taxes. Evil begins when one lets the tax-gatherer impinge upon one's soul. . . . The Jews, I hasten to add, have had profounder and often less ignoble reasons for the assimilationist attitude. They had no bit of earth, like these Alsatians, of which neither war nor conquest nor reconquest could rob them, no single living speech of their own, nor anything but that thread of ethical tradition and that inmost core of otherness, of *Eigenart,* wherewith to resist both the bright lures and the insistent ravages of the world. And so many thousands have suc-

cumbed. But never the people as a whole, never the great and victorious remnant of Israel which is today gathering unto itself the children and even the children's children of those whose resistance was once broken. No, we are not a bad example for cultural minorities who are in danger of immolating themselves to the notion that power is excellence. For even our renegades have had somewhat other motives and as a people we have never compromised with mere power nor been at pains to disguise our contempt for it. . . . On the other hand, all other minorities and all other men have something that we have not—a native earth under their feet. Our Gentile friends who take their earth as instinctively for granted as they do air or water or bread never or almost never realize the subtle initial alienation from which we suffer. Neither do most modern Jews, especially in America, ever become more than dimly aware of this dark, mysterious, pervasive circumstance. All the more sensitive among them love the landscape in which they were born and amid which they grew. But in the very quality of that love which is often, in America and Germany, more impassioned than that of members of the folk, there is a problematic element from the beginning: an element of refuge-seeking, of a too close embracing—close to the point of pain—of what is not wholly ours, of a touch of haste and heat, or of a redundant flicker of over-awareness. If we have a garden we wall it too high with stones or in our thoughts or else we are afraid to wall it with stones because our hearts wall it too eagerly, and amid the most beloved woods and waters we suddenly know that we must buy them with money or with love. Not from the beginning are

they fully ours. . . . I was firmly persuaded of the correctness of these observations years before I was able to define or formulate them. The storm-tossed Jew starts out with a grave disadvantage compared to even the most *déraciné* of Gentiles. He has no earth under his feet. Sometimes—I have seen it—he plays the country-gentleman and walks bareheaded and in knickers through the village. You ask the village folk: "To whom does that estate belong?" The answer is, "To a Jewish gentleman." And because, of course, he pays good wages and contributes to the village's communal activities and is carefully conventional in aspect and demeanour, there are added immediately the words: "Oh, a very fine man!" And in that sincere phrase you hear the deep subconscious echoes: "Yes, this one is an exception, no usurer or Christ-killer or poisoner of wells—not this one." Does the gentleman own his earth and sky? . . . I had long, very long hoped for the experience of a trip to Palestine. . . .

VI

The story of our journey to Poland and to Palestine I have related in *Israel*. But in the pages of that book I sought rather to speak to others than for myself; the subject of communication there was not a private experience so much as a public message. I wanted to arouse, to persuade, to convince. For I had, among many other things, stood on Mt. Scopus and seen with a deep vicarious shame the few pitiful rebuilt barracks and remembered at the same time the campus of the meanest of American universities

and also remembered the buildings given by Jews to those universities. I shared, antecedently, of course, the essential ideology of Zionism as the latest expression of our people's will to persist. What aroused me, then, was the contrast between American wealth and the poverty that evidently retarded Palestinian colonization. Nor were the American millionaires building a Jewish university. They were still deep in the psychology of the ghetto; they still felt that they had to buy toleration and respect by indiscriminate munificence. They were still grateful for freedom in the life of economic competition, for not having their houses mobbed and their temples desecrated. They were still nervous. They were still afraid of doing what members of every other racial and religious group did instinctively and as a matter of course; many of their gifts were still propitiatory; else how could there be lacking for one day the paltry million or two wherewith to give our university on Mt. Scopus the requisite dignity of its physical existence? Belloc and many others accuse us of a sinister solidarity. Alas, if they but knew! Out of assimilatory snobbishness a Viennese banker builds himself a palace on the Avenue des Champs Elysées; out of assimilatory pseudo-liberalism bankers lend money to governments that are known to organize pogroms; out of assimilatory romanticism Hatvany walks into a Hungarian prison and lets Horthy confiscate his fortune. I could multiply examples indefinitely. I wrote *Israel* at all events in order to contribute what little I could to the growth of a higher degree of solidarity and so of freedom and of self-respect among the Jews of America. . . .

To me in my own person, the land of Palestine had a

deeper and a subtler message. Here, at last, was my earth. I felt it at once. I knew. Never, I dare say, shall I be able to dwell upon that earth. It does not matter. At last I knew, no longer as a theory but as a living fact, the ultimate meaning of *Galuth,* of exile, and the element which constitutes that exile for us by our lack of it. Man is a memoried being. He is allied to his kind by the imaginative reconstruction within him of the history of his people upon a given soil. But wherever we dwell in the diaspora we have been the objects not the subjects of the historic process. No forest, city, tower, no hill or stream or monument, no work of nature and no work of man has a creative memory for us. I stand—to take a flagrant and concrete example—before the beautiful cathedral of Strassburg. An hundred memories rise in the mind—above all the memory of the young Goethe who met in this city both Herder and Fridericke, both inspiration and love, and found in the Cathedral his revelation of the German architecture of the Middle Ages. Later we drove out to Sesenheim, the scene of that immortal idyl and in fact we found certain sections of Goethe's autobiography a sufficient guide to this neighbourhood. For from all these hills and valleys and dark green forests and soft towns one comes back always in imagination and in fact to the Minster square, starting, in the city itself, from the bank of the *Ill* and going through the Blauwolkengasse toward the glowing tower of the great church. Other memories throng here: of Johannes Tauler, the mystic and preacher, of Fischart, quaint, vigorous and copious proseman, of folk-song and of legend. "O Strassburg, O Strassburg, du wunderschöne Stadt!" . . . And

what of us amid these memories, since on the lower Rhine there have been Jewish settlements the origins of which are literally lost amid the shadows of antiquity? In the fourteenth century came the Black Death and the Jews, supposedly exempt, were accused of having poisoned the wells and they were burned alive, men and women and children, some say eight hundred, some say two thousand, some say in their graveyard and others say on this very square. It was on St. Valentine's day of 1349. And it was decreed that twice on every night forevermore a horn was to be blown from the spire of the Cathedral to remind all men through all years to come of the shame and cruelty of the perfidious Jews. "O Strassburg, O Strassburg, du wunderschöne Stadt!" . . . Yes, I know we live in the twentieth century and these are old, unhappy, far-off things. But I am trying to illustrate something. The cities are not ours, nor the sky nor the earth. "We have forgotten," say the modern Jews. But the consciousness of the folk has not and nothing, in any case, can retroactively give us the history of this land as our own. "But even my great-grandfather was a respected man, and—" So was mine. Nor do I pretend that superstition has not diminished. Moreover economic considerations began to prevail. We could be useful and were used. But we remained, what we had always been, objects not subjects, and neither longing nor forgetfulness nor devotion could make the earth ours. Nor is there any room for resentment here. We are a different folk; we do remain eternally ourselves. Things have been as they have been and I accept the whole fatality of history. My plea is that we should indeed accept it and be guided

by it. . . . Even the pure unhistoried earth of America is not wholly mine. Deeply as I have loved it, I am an alien there too. So soon as I express the inmost me—not the economic man or the mere man of knowledge—I come into collision with folk-ways and beliefs and laws as alien to me as the notion that my ancestors poisoned the wells. . . . I do not think this state of affairs irremediable. The day will come when we shall arise and be ourselves and demand the right to co-operate creatively in strict proportion to our numbers in the civilizations amid which we live. Today the Methodist farmers of the South, the craggy, fine New England villagers are not only quaint to me but a little menacing. I could understand and admire them and regard them with affection if there were not the danger of their notions dictating my way of life. . . . But Jerusalem is not quaint to me nor the hill-country of Ephraim nor Carmel by the sea nor Tiberias, though founded by a Roman, nor Safed on her hill. The earth is mine—is ours. Between this soil and these stars we became what we are; here we created our image and our God who is the projection and symbol of that image and our law which still commands us when both our minds and our hearts have forgotten it. . . .

VII

The Palestinian experience completed in me a process of imaginative dissociation. . . . The majority of Western Jews, surveying the historic places and memorials of their own and other countries, steeped in the literature of one or

more European languages, have cultivated a sense of possession in this past, as though they and their ancestors too had creatively possessed it. They have not only forgotten Jewish history; they have imaginatively and emotionally substituted Gentile history for their own. American Jews go as tourist pilgrims to England as though to find the roots and background of their own cultural life; they visit the cities of the Continent and see even in Cologne and Speyer, in Vienna and Venice, in Narbonne and Rome only the splendid and heroic memories and monuments of the Germanic and Latin peoples who are native to the soil. And why should they not, they will ask. The question will be echoed by liberal Gentiles, while tense European nationalists will go further and declare that only by thus identifying themselves inwardly with Western civilization are Jews tolerable as fellow citizens at all. Well, the reasons why Jews should not do this thing are many and subtle and far-reaching and profound. There are first of all the subjective reasons. Whether our character has doomed us to our history or whether our history has shaped us into our present being, the fact of our peculiarity as a people remains. Now inner clarity and balance are perhaps the chief goods of life. And how is he to attain that clarity and balance of which the fruits are wisdom and understanding, dignity and grace of life, whose whole inner existence is founded, consciously or not, on an unreality, a figment, an artifice; all of whose cultural processes are parasitic in their nature? The test of the exactness of this analysis can be made in many ways of which even the crudest will bring its truth overwhelmingly home. Take the sleekest and

most completely Westernized of Jews assimilated in the third generation and tell him that his direct ancestor, five centuries ago, trudged the homeless roads of the world in search of a livelihood, was fervent in study and exercises of piety and suffered death at the hands of the Inquisition on a false charge of proselytizing. That modern Jew's immediate reaction will be a melancholy but profound acquiescence. Tell him, on the other hand, that his ancestor was a knight in armour riding forth to war at the behest of his feudal chief and our modern gentleman's equally immediate reaction will be an ironic and slightly ribald grin. No, not at all on account of the factual unlikelihood! To him, as to that remote ancestor of his, provision for wife and child and home and learning and knowledge and stoical endurance are serious and natural things, while chivalry, loyalty by convention and fighting are to him simply stupid and dangerous. The content of the Jewish mind has changed, not that mind itself. Hence the voluntary rejection of Jewish memories and the substitution of Gentile memories and traditions produces disharmonies, suppressed conflicts and ultimately a sickness of the soul. . . . Ah, they end badly, these Jews who have utterly suppressed their Jewishness. Volumes of tales could be written of them. They will be very rich and honoured, too, by the world. But an element of grotesqueness will cling to their Gentile correctness and there will be just grins and whispers behind their backs. Do they not feel those grins and whispers? They will be scholars and masters of speech and will bear beautiful Nordic names. But they know that the true name and true inwardness of them is known, and in their most brilliant

works and so, too, in their souls there will be an element of strain, of excess, almost of hysteria. They will be converted to Catholicism and enter monasteries and flee from the monasteries again and alternate between asceticism and debauchery and find no peace. I could write each one of these tales here indicated and draw my subject from a living model. . . .

We wrong ourselves. We also wrong subtly but very definitely the objects of our assimilatory vision. We are like those inept theorists who, forgetting that art is expression, and that craftsmanship is a means toward an end—a fact long patent and now demonstrated by analytical psychology—declare the painters and sculptors of the Christian tradition to have been concerned solely with planes and colours and rhythm and problems of composition. We aestheticize unendurably and rob the objects we seem to embrace of their significance and power. To us, Chartres is at best a strangely noble piece of design. We may coldly apprehend but cannot feel its burning and special aspiration, its happy devout polytheism, its weird and ghastly and ribald sculpturesque detail. These things are beyond the range of our inner experience. The cathedral does not *speak* to us. We are pretending to ourselves when we do not inwardly smile at the votive candles burning in equal number before a rosy-cheeked Virgin and an image of St. Anthony of Padua. We are in better case in respect of secular monuments. But the distinction is a specious one. Civilizations express in their totality an ethos which is definite, however hard to sum up in a formula, and strongly one despite the multiplicity of its expressions. And the

ethos that from within outward built Christian civilization is not ours. Nor does it tend to become very much more our own. In the past we were excluded from direct co-operation and in the assimilatory period we have more than ever excluded ourselves. For imitation changes no form and enlarges no boundaries. Only by being steadfastly themselves and Judaizing the civilizations of their homelands in proportion to their numbers and ability will the Jews of the diaspora be able to exchange cultural parasitism for cultural creativeness. And the first step toward that end is the cleanness and clearness wrought within by the discipline of imaginative dissociation.

I would make this point very clear. It is assimilation that excludes us from the civilizations amid which our lot is cast. If you ape the Nordic unsuccessfully, your life and expression will be both distracted and shoddy. If your aping is successful you increase quantitatively and never on a high plane that which already exists. Felix Mendelssohn is but another and not indispensable German composer of the Romantic school. Powerful personalities whatever their superficial theory or attitude have never luckily been able to exclude the strong essential Jewishness from their lives and works and it is this element that gives them both character and quality. It is by virtue of this element that they have stamped themselves upon Western civilization and wrought upon it creatively and so made it in a measure their own. The blank assimilationist is ape or parrot; he has a rich and fruitful relationship to nothing under the sun. He is sterile. He plays safe. In America he writes music like Mr. Irving Berlin's and stories like Mr. Octavus

Roy Cohen's. He purveys the odious trade-goods in the arts. The anti-Semites are quite right. Jews in all countries produce a great quantity of base stuff. They do so, however, not because they are Jews but because they are desperately trying not to be Jews. They are trying to be imitations of their neighbours and the great and deep and noble things are not imitable from without.

VIII

On the way to Rome, opposite the dark hill and town of Orvieto, there stole into my mind a forgotten and now suddenly recovered hour of long ago. I saw a bright Queenshaven college classroom; I saw the faces, blurred and a little featureless as in a dream, of my classmates and heard across the years the high slightly hoarse voice of our professor: "Credat Judæus Apella!" It was the sceptical and amiable Horace who, repudiating for himself some foolish superstition, exclaimed: "Let Apella, the Jew, believe that!" Evidently I—else why the vivid recovery of that lost hour—had winced inwardly there in that Queenshaven classroom at the age of sixteen and had then promptly expelled from my mind the brief whiplike phrase of the poet which alone might have shown me that the heritage of classical antiquity was, in a sense, not mine. Another was intimately mine. But what was it? Like all Jewish youngsters educated wholly in the traditions of the West I had heard and knew little of that heritage of mine—mine apparently whether I wanted it or not—except in terms of contempt and contumely followed at last in the nineteenth century

by such coldly practical pleas for tolerance as Macaulay's *Essay on the Civil Disabilities of the Jews.* Is that situation alone not enough to warp the psychical development and health of anyone? You are immersed in a given civilization and you must fear any voice from that civilization that concerns yourself, your fathers, your blood. Worst of all, you come to believe those voices. Who has not met Jews sincerely convinced that both Rome and Pauline Christianity were not only pragmatically but philosophically right, that the oral tradition, Talmud and Midrashim—are a mass of superstitious rubbish and that the thoughts and beliefs and customs of their ancestors could never have been saving ones? Their sincerity does not ease such people nor does their rigorous expulsion of all things Jewish from their consciousness touch the causes of their dis-ease. Man is so made that he cannot with impunity negate himself, his blood, his instincts and his heritage. The first necessity, then, is that dissociation of which I have spoken, the imaginative separation of our own history—for better or worse—from the general history of the nations.

"Credat Judæus Apella!" Horace writing this phrase in about the year 35 B.C. had no fear of being misunderstood. The Jews in Rome, already dwelling on the site of the later ghetto between the slope of the Capitoline hill and the bank of the Tiber, were currently known among cultivated Romans as a fierce, weird and ignorantly superstitious Oriental folk. For they alone of all the nations that Rome had conquered refused their assent to the symbols of Rome's power. They would pour no libation to the Capitoline

Jove nor honour the statue of a deified emperor; their sullen resistance and their austere separateness from Pagan civilization seemed to exclude them from the universal community of mankind. Neither the simple citizen of the empire nor the cultivated courtier of Augustus could make anything of a people, the Holy of Holies of whose temple was "a vacant dwelling-place and empty shrine with no image of any god" and concerning whom, therefore, arose the strange counter-superstition that they worshipped nothing but the clouds and the sky itself. From such causes sprang the fierce impatience of Tacitus, the fiercer slander of Juvenal and many centuries later the ironic contempt of Gibbon.

Yes, anti-Semitism is older than Christianity and may easily survive it. How futile for the extreme rationalist, often an assimilated Jew, to deny the uniqueness of our character and experience or else to refuse it, when he is constrained to admit the facts, a meaning and a function. It is true enough that any attempt strictly to define this meaning and this function leads us into difficulties. Historic processes elude the grasp of logical definition. But this meaning and this function can be experienced without being formulated; they can be lived without being defined; they can be felt and expressed while we wait for more knowledge. . . .

I felt them in Rome. Here, written in stone and recorded in marble, is the long history of that Western world which has made us in each stage and during every phase, in splendour or decay, the objects of its fear or of its hate. Yet we had never any power wherewith to make ourselves feared

and hated except the power of the spirit and the only tangible monument of our millennial existence in all this city of memories and monuments is that relief under the Arch of Titus delineating the destruction of our Temple and our capital. Pagan Rome hated us because we would not bow down to its eagles and fasces and statues; Christian Rome hated and feared us because we could not follow the morbid Hellenizing of Paul of Tarsus nor endure the paganization of the religion we had unwittingly brought forth; now that the high wave of Christianity recedes men are inventing new myths, whether of race or of conspiracy, wherewith to justify their hate anew. . . . It is well for a Jew to go to Rome and on the Forum and again on the Pincian hill or on the Vatican to survey in imagination that pageant of history of which the memorials are all about him. Palaces have been built and have been ruined; a thousand triumphs have ended in a page of history and a little dust; a million men have died for the vain symbols of some transitory power.

O miseras hominum mentis, O pectora cæca!

A high and sad compassion for all mankind steals into the heart of the Jew. His people could not build palaces nor grasp after power nor, by enslaving others, enslave themselves. They could not triumph over their fellow men; they could only endure. And so time, cruel destroyer of all others, has relented to them, has let them be and continue almost as changeless in their kind and character as are the olives and the pines and cypresses upon the Pincian hill. Building no monuments they have remained, strug-

gling with none they have prevailed, opposing the spirit to the world, they are still here. . . .

IX

We saw all the obligatory things in Rome. But these were only details in the historic vision. The walls of the Sistine Chapel speak a language that reaches neither my heart nor my mind. So do the works of most of the great Italian painters. They are magnificent. But what they are saying is archaic and alien to the point of meaninglessness and the mere delight of the eye soon wearies me. A Botticelli or two in Florence, a Tintoretto in Venice delineating a group of merchants—a few things like that gave me the strongest feeling of breathing a permanent life. I am probably a simpleton in these matters. But I sometimes wonder whether a great many other people intelligent in their way like myself are not driven through these miles of saints and madonnas by fashion and the fear of seeming barbarous. Of other expressions of Christianity I was touched by the catacombs despite the ominous swastika scratched into these mouldy walls, and by a primitive, hidden chapel of the earliest days here and there. The martyred and fugitive Church has the sweetness and persuasiveness of all that oppose the spirit to the powers of earth. The militant and triumphant Church, an empire with prisons and engines of war, is even amid the grandeur of St. Peter's a thing that evokes in me both horror and disdain—horror at its long cruelties toward those whom it still calls "perfidious Jews," though not to be sure toward them alone,

disdain at that extreme of changeless superstition which has worn away by the kisses of innumerable pilgrims the brazen foot of the gigantic statue of the Church's tutelary saint. . . .

The antique Pagan world, both in the incomparable Vatican galleries and elsewhere, speaks to me in a clearer and a nobler speech, even as the Latin poets are closer to me than Dante—closer because farther, clearer, more objective. My historical implication with them lies so far back that it no longer touches or troubles me. Between historical Christianity and myself there are turbid elements of conflict, of early assimilatory tenderness, of the melancholy and useless defection of men of my people, of our blood and of our torment that stain the whole mediaeval world. On the other hand: classical antiquity and classical Judaism, from the Periclean age and the Prophetic period on were contemporary and coexistent powers and forces. Rome crushed us. But it crushed a people whose existence it did not dream of denying. Thus in the long perspective of time the Græco-Roman culture on the one hand, the culture of Israel on the other, stand out as the two primal and primary modes of human life, character and aspiration, the two pure and original forces in the white man's history. . . . Science is the triumph of Hellenism. But the World War and its aftermath have taught us that science can destroy as well as save unless men use it for ends of the good life, the life of peace and tolerance and the denial of force alone. The Churches of the Pauline Christ stand by in uneasy pomp and helpless confusion and bondage to the powers of the earth. Here and there ultra-liberal Christians, repudiating Paul and the historic Church, return to Jesus and to his

sources of ethical tradition. Hence they preach a thin but pure Judaism. But more is needed to curb the machine, the inventor of poisonous gases, Pagan cruelty and idolatry of power. A present and persuasive ethos is needed. It is needed to be remembered that Hebraism did not die after its classical period nor ceased to function according to its own nature after the Christian schism. A living folk sustained and ensured its continuous life and development. The entire ethic of the Gospel is in the Talmud, free of the myth-mongering of the late Platonists and of the moral perversity of Paul. . . . I am not concerned over our making proselytes. But the whole of Jewish tradition, from the Prophets to Chasidism and beyond may yet assume a function in the scientific age which historical Christianity is clearly not exercising.

I have thus been brought insensibly to the strongest and ultimate reason for our imaginative dissociation from Christian culture. The wisest and highest minds of the West admit that Christianity is failing as a curb upon Pagan barbarism and as a guide of the good life in the age of science and of the industrial revolution. It fights scientific truth, which is saving, but co-operates in strike-breaking and in war; it damns Darwin and prays for victory; it calls Freud a dirty fellow and is not conscious of Einstein but consents to scientific progress in the shape of aeroplanes that drop bombs and scatter gases. A new synthesis of Hellenism and Hebraism, of science and conduct, of nature and spirit, is needed and a new humanism that may arise from such a synthesis. How shall it arise if the Jew, the living bearer of the Hebraic tradition, flee from that tradition and from

himself and assimilate himself to a dying cult, an ineffectual ethos, a way of life that is demonstrably no longer saving? . . . It is not by accident that my great friend Thomas Mann, though a Nordic patrician, having investigated in *The Magic Mountain* those modes and forms of life and thought which failed to save Europe from physical and spiritual disaster, now turns his magnificent and sober and penetrating creative vision upon the earliest record of Israel. He too wants a new humanism, a new synthesis of *Natur* and *Geist,* and from the heart of Europe his mind turns—perhaps not wholly aware of the profound meaning of that impulse—to the hills of Judæa. . . .

X

Religions are ways of life; every prophet says implicitly or explicitly: I am the way . . . the way to salvation, to reconciliation with one's soul, one's fellow men, with pain and death and the inscrutable universe. There are three ways of life in the Western world: the Pagan, the Christian, the Jewish.

The Pagan accepts man and the universe as given. He accepts nature as implacable and fortune as mad and blind and brutal. Cicero, seeking in Euripides a passage of universal truth and weightiness to turn into Latin verse, selects: "There is no mortal whom pain does not touch or many ills . . . earth must return to earth and life is to be feared by all; we are as the fruits of the field. Thus necessity decrees." Sic jubet necessitas! Such is the central reaction of an enlightened Paganism from Euripides to Bertrand

Russell's essay *A Free Man's Worship.* Accepting man and nature as they are, the two aims of Paganism were and are to understand the nature of things as far as the mind of man will reach and thus to subdue fear. Hence the Greeks laid the foundations of every science and the sombre rapture of Lucretius celebrates the conquest over superstition. To curb desire not because it is evil but because it brings pain, to confront age and death and the malevolence of nature with calm, with dignity, with serenity—such are the high achievements of a pagan ethos. For human warmth there was love of country—the extension of the affection for hearth and home to tribe and land. Vergil's

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas

is the one great Pagan note: "Happy is the man who can attain knowledge of the causes of things and can thus trample underfoot all fears and fate the inexorable and the tumult of greedy Acheron." And the other note is sounded in his lovely invocation to Italy:

> Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
> magna virum.

And there is in this way and view of life necessarily a third note, the note popularly supposed to be most characteristic of Paganism, and that is the Horatian "refrain from asking what tomorrow will bring forth and count as gain whatever days Chance gives you and do not spurn, O youth, either delightful loves or choral dances while yet morose old age is far from your fresh blooming." And doubtless the Pagan way of life must dwell on that note among ordinary mortals who are sustained neither by the ardour of the

search for truth nor by that hope of literary glory which one finds expressed by almost all the major ancients:

> Ingenio mors nulla nocet, vacat undique tutum:
> inlæsum semper carmina nomen habent.

I shall not dwell on the commonplaces of every Christian historian and pulpit. But it is true that Paganism omitted almost wholly both the fact and the problem of human suffering. It accepted pain as incurable and bade man make the best of it. Hence the triumph of Paul and of the Christian way of life. For the Pagan acceptance of man and nature it substituted a complete repudiation, for truth vision and for reason faith. It is needless to rehearse here the great and terrible seventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians or the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Doom was at hand. The fashion of this world passeth away. What mattered nature which was about to be shrivelled up like a scroll or man who was an immediate candidate for either heaven or hell? What need was there except to crucify the body of this death? . . . A perfect way of life, perhaps, under the shadow of a last day. Remain as you are, married or unmarried, slave or free. Watch and pray. But the fashion of this world remained. And the Christian repudiation of nature and reason remained too. Hence sprang the incurable antinomy and dualism at the heart of Christianity and the failure of Christianity to humanize life. For force and war and empire and injustice and the Pagan cult of glory and all the actions and passions of the natural man continued, and Christianity declaring all these purely evil and wholly damned had no power upon

them. It lost the world by repudiating the world. It had to endure the repaganization of all mortal things by despising them. "That is the highest wisdom," exclaims the author of the *Imitation of Christ,* "to approach the heavenly realms by a contempt of the world." And again: "Consider yourself, as it were, a wanderer and an exile upon earth." That is the Christian note, that and the rapturous: "Ecce sto ante te pauper et nudus, gratiam postulans et misericordiam implorans!" And above all those final injunctions of the *Imitation:* "The human reason is feeble and can fall into error; true faith cannot fall into error. All reason and all natural investigation must follow faith and must neither precede it nor infringe upon it." Christianity repudiating nature could not Christianize it, possessing all truth it could not seek truth. Hence the world, professing to be Christian, went on its way from Paul to the author of the *Imitation* and from him to Pascal: "The chief malady of man is his restless curiosity concerning things which he cannot know. . . . His whole duty is to love God and hate himself." But man desires to know and cannot live without a measure of self-esteem. The pure doctrine of Paul is a way of life that can be practised only by men fleeing from an immediate wrath to come; the Christian repudiation of the intellect forced all historic Churches, from the mediaeval Papacy to the Southern Fundamentalists of our day to persecute the seeker of new truth. But the Church of Paul, living in a world whose natural passions it could not touch, has had to compromise with that world at every step, protecting the rich against the poor, praying for the victory of its bread-givers in every war, fall-

ing so low as to identify with its catholicity the pagan impulses of the patriot and the warrior.

There is a third way of life, that of the Jew. I deliberately disregard for the moment its great written foundations, the Torah and the Prophets, since these books have been constantly misread and misinterpreted in the light of their fictitious connection with historical Christianity. I leave aside the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, which also belong to a strictly Jewish tradition and have been even more violently wrenched from their historic context. I turn to the oral tradition which, though not recorded in writing until the early centuries of the present era, embodies an ethos that was fully developed at the time of the Babylonian captivity and is still expressed in the pious or instinctive practice of many thousands of human lives.

This Jewish way of life neither accepts nor repudiates without discrimination the natural man and his world. To it both are materials of which a new life is to be wrought. This sanctified human life is to be lived within the law, but not indiscriminately or regarding the dead letter. "The Sabbath is given to you; but you, you are not given to the Sabbath." This attitude, wrongly held to be a Christian contribution, is further elaborated and universalized: "Of such importance is the duty to respect man, one's fellow being, that it is permitted to transgress precepts explicitly announced in the holy law, if these are at variance with that duty." The Jewish way of life seeks flexibly and sanely to sanctify the natural world within which it exists and which it accepts. Its emphasis is not on kind but on quality of action. It knows human life to be what it is. "If one

were to kill the passions, the world would perish." It goes soberly into detail. Among good things are "beauty, strength, wealth, honour, wisdom, old age, white hair and sons." Among things "which are good when used in moderation and harmful when abused, are wine, work, sleep, wealth, travel, sexual love." The Jewish teaching has nothing to say of faith but much of wisdom. But it demands that wisdom issue in action. In a thousand forms and on a thousand occasions it reiterates the principle: "Woe unto the disciples of the law who possess wisdom and do not practice virtue." And what is virtue? "Filial piety, charity, hospitality, the establishment of peace among men." Peace —the four Hebrew letters that symbolize that word are sprinkled up and down these ancient pages. *"The* blessing of God is peace." But this peace is not a metaphysical peace of grace wrought by a miracle. It must be achieved within the actual world by love. "The day of Atonement expiates your offences against God; it does not expiate an offence against a fellow man unless you have reconciled him to you." . . . "Benevolence and love are worth as much as the observation of all the other precepts of the divine law." . . . "Loving-kindness is worth more than all sacrifices." A thousand precepts, examples and legends drive home the same point. With infinite spiritual delicacy the duty toward one's fellow man is defined. One's beneficence shall not hurt his pride nor one's kindness be emphatic. For the aim of one's life is to bring peace and to diminish the suffering that is under the sun. A *Mishna* of the tractate "Synhedrin," of great antiquity to judge by its legendary naïveté, symbolizes the whole matter: "God feels pain each time that

a man suffers. When the blood of a man is spilt, be it even of an impious man, God groans and shows upon his head or arms the very wounds by which one of his children was wounded." And all our actions are to be done, according to the Sayings of the Fathers, "for the sake of God", for the sake of this wounded God. . . . The Western world has tried the Pagan acceptance of man and nature; it has tried the Christian repudiation of man and nature; there is a third way—the sanctification, the humanization of the natural. That way has been tried by only one people.

Chapter Four: Of Two Cities

I

I HAD always wanted to go to Vienna. Perhaps every American nurses a dream of some city far away which shall answer his favourite moods. I know one who somehow finds the home of his spirit in Siena and another who has lost his heart to Tangiers and a third whose year is barren unless it includes a few weeks in Florence. What drew me to Vienna was not at all obscure. It was, first of all, music. For music or, at least, certain kinds of music gives me more pleasure than anything else in the world of art. Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Hugo Wolf—these are my men. The pleasure that I derive from Italian music, except some of the oldest, is small. Verdi, at his best, seems to me incurably rhetorical; the minors simply do not exist. Russian music at its most characteristic wounds my conscience, like so much of Russian literature, by its yearning for chaos, by its subtle assault upon the forms of personality. Of the moderns I follow the earlier Schönberg and the extraordinary experiments of Wellecz—but these are Viennese too—with delight. The more or less atonal composers and the dealers in mere atmosphere seem to me feeble and falsely literary. In a song of Brahms there is a great interpretation of poetry; this interpretation is symbolized in a unique and independent melodic invention—a thing new and immortally beautiful; there is atmosphere, of course, as an inevitable by-product; there is

aroma. What work of fine art has not the atmosphere and aroma characteristic of its mood and aim? A song by, let us say, Honegger, has atmosphere—so I am told. Assuredly, it has nothing else. Rather a *testimonium paupertatis*. . . . Have I forgotten Wagner? No, I am at the mercy of the old wizard still, though I am increasingly offended by the erotic Germano-Christian mysticism to which he finally succumbed. So the composers who are identified with Vienna are the masters who give me purest joy, who release me from the troubling will and the troubling intellect. They are rest, refreshment, rapture. I recognize the danger of the excesses of romanticism among a few of them. But those moments are not my great moments. Vienna was identified in my heart with the Seventh Symphony and the Ninth, with the *Zauberflöte,* that divinely perfect work, with an hundred *lieder* which have always been to me the essence of poetry, the very soul of art. . . .

But Vienna had another lure for me, and this lure came from my earlier reading of the works of Arthur Schnitzler. I suspected, of course, knowing the nature of art, that Vienna was not and could never have been precisely the city that is in Schnitzler. But it was, after all, the city that evoked Schnitzler's vision. And that was glory enough. Not because Schnitzler is one of the very great masters. The elegiac mood is not the highest nor will the strongest spirits want to dwell in a perpetual autumn. But to me Schnitzler's Vienna seemed, through some consonance of favourite moods and thoughts, the most consoling and delightful among all the cities either of earth or of the imagination. . . .

For all these reasons I was very glad that a good practical motive for a prolonged residence in Vienna existed. It was in this city that Thelma was most eager to continue her studies and to familiarize herself, as she had long wanted to do, with the style and method of *lieder* singing.

We soon made friends and I found Vienna to be, in addition to all else, a city of conversation. Everyone was frightfully poor and even people who had been rich before the war had definite hardships to undergo. They neither tried to hide these hardships nor were they emphatic about them. It was understood that all material things belong to a second order of importance. From this spirit arises the possibility of conversation, of which we have so little in America. In the drawing-rooms and in the cafés and gardens of Vienna it is understood that ideas are anterior to both actions and things and are more powerful and important than either. They are the true substance of conversation and so, whether it was at the Beer-Hofmanns' or at the Leon Kellners' or at the house of our friend Dr. Gabriele Liebel or at the Herrencafé or even the Grabencafé or in spring and summer in Türkenschanz Park, the talk turned easily and naturally to permanent issues, to ultimate matters, to the foundations of politics and literature and life.

In spite of all this and of the incomparable Alpine places —Hinterbrühl and Semmering—which lie at the very door of the city, I felt a constant unrest during the first six or eight months of our residence there. At first I interpreted this unrest as a vague sense of exile from America, even as homesickness. Yet I could not quite understand why I should feel so. I had everything I cared for here in much

greater measure than I could hope to have it in America. . . . Spring came and Thelma and I went for tea, as we did nearly every afternoon now, to Türkenschanz Park. We sat under the blossoming chestnut trees in a little arbour and heard the faint music of a distant orchestra. I leaned back in my chair and suddenly felt a sense of relaxation, of ease and of leisure that I had been unconsciously fighting off. The American rhythm and tempo, the American strain and alertness and resistance had been in my nerves. Life until now had always been a battle, a matter of striving and crying to me and of effort in futile directions. The rhythm and tempo of the many years would not yield so easily to a different one. In America, especially among my friends on the *Nation* staff, we had been interested in ideas too. But the ideas were ready and fixed and complete in our minds and our interest was to make them prevail. But among my friends in Vienna there was a profound disinterestedness, a detachment from the practical, a passion for ideas that I would call abstract, had it not been so saturated with life and experience. Now this attitude gave the days an entirely new rhythm and my nerves had to find and to adjust themselves to this rhythm.

II

I cannot disengage the quality of Vienna's total life, because I came to know only definite aspects of that life, though no doubt these are the aspects by which the Vienna of my time will be remembered. And that that fact grieves and irritates the indigenous Viennese is human enough and

comprehensible enough. But let me think over the people who were our friends or acquaintances during our stay in Vienna: Schnitzler, the Beer-Hofmanns, the Wassermanns, the Hofmannsthals, Adler and Bernfeld the psychoanalysts —Freud was too ill that year to see anyone, but sent us the friendliest messages—Max Reinhart, Dr. Ernst Benedikt, the owner of the *Neue Freie Presse,* and his amiable wife, the editors of the *Freie Presse* Dr. Auernheimer and Dr. Wertheimer, our dear friend Joseph Bard who is now beginning to make a name for himself as a writer in English, Franz Werfel and Egon Wellecz, the composer, and Karl Kraus and Karl Kautsky and Herzka, probably the first music publisher in the world, and Dozent Dr. Aschner, and the Kellners, the eminent Shakespearean scholar and his gifted wife, whom I have already mentioned. And I could go on multiplying the names of charming and cultivated people, perhaps the most charming and cultivated I have ever known, which would not mean anything to the world at large. My point is that all these people are Jews—all. The folk who built this lovely city have evidently suffered an eclipse of spiritual and creative vigour and the leadership in literature, art, science, music, has passed largely into Jewish hands. The Gentile artists evidently live in sullen withdrawal, for we never met either Anton Wildgans, for instance, nor Richard von Schaukal, whose poetry I have always admired. Once at the house of Frau Gustav Mahler we met the novelist Trentini, a man who impressed me at once with his human and intellectual integrity, and both in Vienna and in Marienbad we saw a good deal of Alexander Moissi, the actor. And that, with the exception of a

few ministers of state at a great reception, and of waiters and hotel-keepers and servants, completes the tale of Gentiles. The only Catholics we met were a group of Jews whom Alfred Loos, the eminent architect and eccentric thinker, had told years before that, since it was they who had brought the horrors of Christianity into the world, the least they could do was to share its burdens and its disadvantages.

It is needless to say that this society and its atmosphere were infinitely congenial to me. And yet I could not help feeling—since I was not accustomed to such a situation—that, in spite of its overwhelming triumphs, it existed under heavy pressure. It could not be blind to the fundamental resistance to it of the people of the country. The enlightened elements among that people are, of course, thoroughly aware of the fact that the elimination of the Jews from Vienna would mean the utter economic and intellectual collapse of the city. That knowledge does not lessen the instinctive resistance of the folk. Now the Jews are necessarily aware of this resistance; their subconsciousness, if not their consciousness, can seldom be wholly free from a troubled perception of the psychical pressure under which they live and function. Their instinctive answer has been for several generations the same answer given by my Berlin friends and by enlightened assimilationists in America, the answer, namely, that the difference in character and temper between themselves and their Austrian fellow citizens is a wicked invention of the anti-Semites and that their lives and works, their spirit and their influence are wholly at one with the Germanic civilization amid which they live.

They try, to do them justice, to make this answer a wholly sincere one; they try to feel and think and be German to the last fibre of their brains. Their very triumphs and achievements, in view of the decadence of the indigenous Austrians of today, shows that they have not succeeded in quenching the Jewish sources of their energy. Nor is it without its special and high significance that Vienna, where Jewish assimilation has produced its richest fruits, is also the city whence arose with Theodor Herzl the movement of political Zionism and with Sigmund Freud that science of analytical psychology which, though applicable to all men, is first of all an effort on the part of the Jewish people to heal itself of the maladies of the soul contracted in the assimilatory process. . . .

I have been accused of playing into the hands of the anti-Semite and I shall be accused of doing the same thing here once more. Now the anti-Semite starts out with an undoubted truth, a truth that we Jews have always denied, when we have denied it, to our extreme hurt and peril—the truth of the difference between Gentile and Jew. But the anti-Semite, being muddle-headed and being afflicted with a shattering inferiority complex, at once translates his perception of difference into terms of value and, fearing that the Jew is superior, compensates by declaring him racially inferior and over-compensates to the length of bitter hatred, to the length of insult, theft, arson, murder. The proof of the correctness of this analysis is at hand. Anti-Semitism is most violent either in such half-barbarous countries as Poland and Roumania where it would be wise and profitable, in fact, to let the Jews be the teachers of the

people in both economic and intellectual matters, or else amid very great and very gifted peoples, such as the Germans, whose tragic history—for the injustices of which my sympathy and understanding are boundless—has given them a nervous over-awareness of both their qualities and defects. The French and the English, serene in the unbroken consciousness of their pre-eminence and power, can afford to let the Jews in their midst function without exasperation or envy. . . .

Of the pitiable folly of anti-Semitism Vienna, too, offered an example. While the heads of the Austrian state were welcoming the Zionist Congress in the Konzerthaus, an anti-Semitic rabble, not uninspired by powerful influences, started a riot in protest. Now if the anti-Semites of the world were earnest men, sincere in their conviction that the Jew transforms their civilizations into his alien image, they would all be passionate, radical Zionists and co-operate with Jewry and with the mandatory power to facilitate the emigration of Jews to Palestine. It is, on the other hand, the liberal and humane Gentile who is a friend of Zionism. The anti-Semite is a poor, blinded, beaten creature who has invented the myth that the stick wherewith he is beaten is not in his sins and in his soul or even in his misfortunes, but is in the hands of the Jew. There is a remedy easily stated and perhaps forever unattainable by such a being as man: perceptions of difference must be rigidly dissociated from judgments of value or, at the very least, judgments of value must be, so to speak, horizontal in character, not vertical or hierarchical. For so soon as the concepts of higher and lower are introduced we have hatred and war.

A dry enough formulation, I admit. Translated into terms of actual human life, it represents the ultimate hope of mankind.

III

The question of the attitude and status of my Viennese friends did not trouble me very actively. But it was always a psychical difficulty a little in the background. To adjust oneself to that precise situation one must, I suppose, have been born to it. I came to feel, for instance, that Schnitzler's creation of his special Vienna, well-grounded, doubtless, in reality, was a defensive Jewish dream and wish fulfilment. . . . I don't want to drive the terminology of analytical psychology too hard, but in cases like this it represents closely and precisely the operations of the mind, especially of the creative mind. . . . In no other way, at all events, could I integrate this well-groomed, slightly humourless elderly gentleman with his rather hard and inflexible and nervously restless manner with the Mozartian ease and grace and beauty of rhythmic line of his works. . . . Everywhere in Vienna, except in the delightful companionship of the Beer-Hofmanns and the Kellners who are Jewishly minded in my sense and yet exquisitely equipped Central Europeans, everywhere I felt the subtle strain and hushed torment of a human position false and questionable at its core. And I became spiritually involved in it through personal liking, through a deep similarity of aesthetic and intellectual tastes between these people and myself. I felt a note of strain even in phenomena that I

welcomed. I felt it, for instance, as definitely in the Zionism of a brilliant and tenaciously ambitious man of letters like Felix Salten, who had in former years become a passionate hunter and sportsman out of motives I must not question, as I felt it in the blankly complete ignoring of his own and others' Jewishness on the part of Max Reinhart. In brief, this lovely world, so infinitely and immediately congenial to me, this well-tempered Viennese life passed among streets and gardens and beside hills that will always hold a charm above any other for me—this world and this life were to me like a beautiful body suffering from a slow malady of the innermost organs. There is nothing so gross and definite as pain; there are obscure tremors; now and then in hours of the night a hand is passionately laid upon the heart; the malady is fatal in the end. . . .

I come to my great example, to my friend Jacob Wassermann, a man of genius, if our time has produced any, a man of exalted character. I choose this rather exorbitant word with care. For we have not the thing in America. Our best writers are serious men and careful craftsmen. But the conception of art, the conception of the *Dichter* or "maker" which in Wassermann is identical with life itself, in the service of which he literally knew hunger and thirst and nakedness in early years—that conception they do not possess. It is not the conception of poet as reformer through either pleading or satire; it is the conception of the mythopœic mind—the mind that creates out of the materials of mortality a world that, in its turn, creatively affects the souls of men, so that the great poet sums up and symbolizes his age and out of that creation helps to shape the future.

Thus he is myth-maker and prophet, servant of God and man.

No one can read the works of Wassermann without perceiving the presence of a high and consecrated creative spirit. When in 1920 I brought out my translation of *Christian Wahnschaffe* under the somewhat unhappy title of *The World's Illusion* people wrote me from all parts of the country to tell me that the reading of the book had been to them in the nature of a religious experience. No well-balanced judge of literature can fail, on the other hand, to see in all of Wassermann's books passages of strain, of exorbitance, of a mysticism that does not ring wholly true, of invention taking the place of vision. Every situation must be one of the highest intensity; that is clearly not possible nor endurable in either life or art. Every remark must reach ultimate profoundness, subtlety, truth. There are no level passages; there are no simple passages. He is so afraid of not seeming great and creative at every moment that he misses, again and again, the greatness that belongs to him. Enough is never enough for him. Heights must tower above ultimate heights, chasms open at the foot of earth's abysses. He is so afraid of the ignoble that he becomes pretentious. Another man would be more purely great with half his genius.

What is his secret and his malady? He has written two small books that are unknown in America: *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* and *Der Literat.* "Deutscher und Jude," German *and* Jew! With infinite passion, with infinite pain he seeks to prove that synthesis possible and perhaps achieved in him. He proclaims his conviction by

which he is willing to stand and fall, that his *Kaspar Hauser* is a German book—not a book about things German written by one who loves and understands Germany and is allied to its civilization by an hundred deep and tender and sacred ties, but a book created by the very spirit of the German folk through him as its mouthpiece. It is a thing excessive and unnatural, of course, a claim which, even were it to be allowed, would be of doubtful value. A trivial anecdote illustrates the poison that poisoned Wassermann's years of development. An American casually asked a German countess whether she had read a certain book by Emil Ludwig. "We do not read him," said the countess, "he is not a German." The noisy minority of racists polluted the work of a man of genius at its core. Let it not be thought that Wassermann ever attacks the problem from any but what seems to him the highest plane or, as he would say, *von höchster Warte*. But tensely high is not always humanly wise. He has said a thousand profound and tragic and searching things. He has never said: "I, a Jew, identified with German civilization by language, love and life, but still a Jew, give you these works. Take them or leave them. My task ends with my work. Ultimate issues between us must be judged by ultimate tribunals on which neither you nor I will sit." He has not said that. Everything else. Not that. . . .

Instead, he wrote the essays called *Der Literat* and identified himself with the folkist distinction between *Dichter*, creative visionary, and *Literat*, mere writer. There is indeed such a distinction, but it lies in other regions than

those assigned to it by the folkist professors and accepted by Wassermann. It has precious little to do with such questionable concepts as *Mythos;* less than nothing with the avoiding of the light of common day; nothing at all with such exorbitant and grandiose arguments as Wassermann sets forth. But the folkists have always cried: only a German can be a *Dichter;* the Jew, at best, remains *Literat.* They could not rise to the plain truth that there are different kinds of *Dichter.* And so Wassermann defensively determined to be not a Jew in literature, but a German, not a *Literat* but a *Dichter.* And this double determination carried out at any cost on every page of his works, wounded his spontaneity from the start. It accounts for the strain and the exorbitance. And these—strange revenge of fate—these are the most un-German qualities imaginable.

Is there nothing to be said for the theory to which Wassermann has brought such vain sacrifices? Yes, much. Doubtless the loftiest works of the human spirit are works that spring spontaneously from men identified with their people. Isaiah could not have been a Greek nor Plato a Jew nor *Faust* written by an Englishman nor *Paradise Lost* by a Frenchman. But a Jew of the diaspora should in plain human common sense resign himself *ab integro* to the patent fact that he cannot produce works under the conditions out of which those supreme works arose. He hasn't the conditions; he can't recreate them by any act of will or a fiat or any subtlety. He has the consolation that Isaiahs and Platos and Goethes and Miltons aren't crowding the market-places of the modern world anyhow; he has the

further and extremely important reflection to sustain him that modern literature at its highest is not mythopœic but personal and that its most notable works are intellectual, realistic and autobiographical. They are critical and anti-mythopœic and profoundly creative for all that. Ibsen, Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hardy, Shaw, Proust. . . . Are they all mere *Literaten*? Very well, then they are.

There is one way in which a modern Jew may hope to be creative in that older sense. I say: may hope. It is not sure. And Wassermann is not unaware of that way. He declares that a great number of mere writers are to be found among Jews. Then he continues: "Where however an individual recovers his great historic consciousness, where he re-enters the matrix of history and tradition, and sustained by eternal symbols, ennobled by an awareness of the eternal stream of his blood, blends organically with these all that he has achieved and acquired—in such a case the Jew may find his way to the divine more easily than other men. The Jew as European, as cosmopolitan is a mere writer; the Jew as an Oriental, not in an ethnographic but in a mythical sense, may be creative." Deeply true! But Wassermann has not chosen that way and must not expect its rewards. He has chosen to be a German. . . .

So had they nearly all—those Viennese friends. But that which you choose must also be, in the last analysis, able and willing to be chosen. Choice requires for its completeness a complete harmony between the chooser and the thing chosen. It is neither simple nor easy. Freedom of choice is curbed not only from within but from without. Love itself is not always wholly persuasive and where much love

is given in vain that love, while still enduring, will be touched with pain and even with an obscure rancour. . . .

IV

We were very happy in Vienna despite my feeling that I was being drawn into the obscure and silent conflict that went on all about me. I escaped from it at times, as we escaped from the society of the musicians and men of letters and journalists with whom necessarily we were most closely allied. . . . Through endless avenues of chestnuts we drove to Eisenstadt, the capital of the little Burgenland. One fine day in the seventeenth century, residential rights in Vienna were once more withdrawn from the Jews and the Prince Esterhazy of those days granted them refuge in Eisenstadt, the little town beside his marvellous park. They built a ghetto with chains for the night. And the chains are still there and nearly all the original ghetto houses and one of the most beautiful, ancient, tangled Jewish graveyards in the world. Here there is a certain family, our hosts for one long, dreamy memorable day, which has kept the two old ghetto houses built by its ancestors in the seventeenth century. The houses have been completely rebuilt within and have been decorated by the unsurpassed designers of Vienna. But the foundation and walls of the houses are unchanged. The Wolfs of Eisenstadt live with a tempered unobtrusive pride in the old ghetto houses, filled with the memorials of their race and family, filled too, with modern art and literature and music. The day was a Sunday and there were processions in the afternoon on the

streets of Eisenstadt and it was clear from a number of small incidents that the German peasantry of the Burgenland as well as the Hungarian peasantry from across the nearby frontier regarded the Jewish Wolfs with a touch of natural respect which they still entertain for their former feudal lords. How natural, I said to myself. Jew or Gentile—there are deeps that call to other deeps. . . .

I must turn once more to landscape and music. An Alpine atmosphere is about Vienna, the poetry of uplands, of meadows that curve toward the sky. The colours of earth and sky are tempered and harmonious; there are no sharp notes; nature does not rush at you with the vehemence of the South; snow-capped peaks are never far; in the city and beyond it are the severe pines of the Alps. The landscape is conducive to the interior life but also, during many months of the year, to a lyric expansiveness, but to an expansiveness that is always curbed, just, never in danger of formlessness. It is thus like the architecture and the manners and the music of the land. No wonder that those born upon this soil love it with an orderly but undying passion. . . .

The music, long known, long loved, came with a new force to me. It throws a not uninteresting light on the musical life of New York that Thelma, having been discovered to have a voice of the very first order, was deliberately trained by her teachers, two women of considerable reputation, for sale—so to speak—to an opera company. No one was interested apparently either in music or in musical education. An audition at the "Met."—that was the aim; Gatti, Otto Kahn, small parts, big parts, subsidies, Italian

methods—such was the babble of these studios. Caruso was God. At the height of his career—here business of bated breath—he tried an hundred *r's* before deciding which one he would sing that evening. In what? Probably *Pagliacci.* No one was aware of the pathos of the fact that this in truth incomparable singer never sang anything that was not strictly second-rate. . . . In an extraordinarily short time Thelma became retrospectively aware of the quality of that world to which she had belonged and lived herself into the language, style, character of the eternal moods of music. She studied in Vienna and gave two recitals. (Her very first recital she had given in Jerusalem.) Critics and friends were very kind to her; Schnitzler hurried over next morning with additional flowers. But no one, I think, was kinder than she deserved. For fine voices are usually trained for opera out of economic motives and our Viennese friends were stirred by the thought that here was one who some day, in the maturity of her powers, would unite the vocal qualities of a Lucrezia Bori with the interpretative depth and poetry of a Julia Culp. To me the fruit of her Viennese experience and her Viennese studies has a special preciousness. For old sorrows and humiliations and lacks and contaminations of the spirit I have as compensation and reward that in hours of tiredness and when the bow of the mind is not bent nor its arrow feathered, she sings to me with perfect phrasing and no less perfect feeling Schubert's "An die Musik," Brahms' "Alte Liebe," or Hugo Wolf's "Verborgenheit." . . .

During the greater part of our stay in Vienna I was busy with the composition of *Israel.* I studied very hard, too,

since I felt deeply my lack of the knowledge I most needed. I knew many histories better than that of the Jews; I knew something of half a dozen languages and nothing of Hebrew. It was not easy at forty to pursue these difficult and intricate studies with the sense of time lost and wasted in the past on an hundred to me quite needless things. If I could read Hebrew only as well as I can read Italian or Dutch or Dano-Norwegian, I said to myself; if someone had only taught me a little of that language, my language, in my youth, instead of Old English and Gothic and Old High German and Old Saxon. . . . I did my feeble best. I am still studying. I am coming back to this. I sit at all hours that I can spare and "learn" in the fine old Jewish sense and feel surer and surer month by month and year by year that here in *Mishna* and *Gemara* is one of the great neglected sources of wisdom, righteousness, life, light, guidance not only, not even primarily, for Jews, but for Western Man.

But even while I was so absorbed in these studies and in the writing of my book, I felt the old pull toward more strictly creative work, toward the freer play of the imagination. I wanted to tell a story—a story with a meaning, but still a story. The impulse tingled in my fingers, as the German idiom has it. So, luckily, when *Israel* was finished and in the publisher's hands, our friend Dr. Aschner, declaring that we were both heavier than we ought to be, packed us off for a month to Marienbad. Here was a real vacation, time to play with, to waste, if need be. One rose early and drank the waters and walked and had little or no luncheon to look forward to, and walked again or drove

a bit in the afternoon through that severe yet homelike German Märchenwald. The air was tonic. One was hungry and had to be content again with the most frugal of dinners, and so there came to me what I had often dreamed of in the midst of our careless modern living: the high joy of the ascetic, the discipline of the body, the at least apparent athleticism of the mind set free from any sense of the clogging flesh. I say: apparent, for the book that I started in Marienbad has generally not been held to be one of my best. It doesn't matter. I had that magnificent experience —the experience of those forests, that air, that high, tense purity of the mind. I read Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg,* assuredly the completest and most enduring work of our age, perfect in form, incredibly searching in thought and rich in creative energy, and in the cool, clean forenoons I scribbled at *Roman Summer.* . . . Shall I defend that little book or let it sink, as it seems to be doing, out of sight? I may, at least, point out the not uninteresting creative intention from which it grew. Literature and life both need to be rooted in a soil. I had heard (I had not then seen) stories of the American artists who deliberately expatriate themselves. I had a vision of such a one—one of the better kind and of certain adventures he might meet, of certain conclusions in life and experience to which he might come. The main point was that his European perspective would enable him to see as creative material, as his creative material, above all, the despised and undistinguished life he had left behind. No very original theme. But all depends, of course, on execution. And structurally I thought I was doing a rather neat thing by sketching in

life and action the very novel that my poor John Austin was going to write and thus giving—through actual story and actual people—a concrete illustration of the way in which literature grows out of life. I still think, by the way, that all the passages concerning the Earnhart family belong to the soundest that I have written at all. In fact I should be very happy if I could only create a few more people like Pa Earnhart and Ma Earnhart and their daughter Grace. The trouble was, of course, that John Austin is something of an ass, and not even a convincing ass. It is no excuse, I know, to say that I have seen him and lived near him, poor boy, and that he had, in fact, no more in him than just that. In truth I helped him out. He remains what my students in the Middle West used to call a "poor simp." Worse than all, the story is told from his point of view, through his consciousness. Now if the foreground personage, through whose consciousness the story is seen, is always the vaguest character in a given book, how much more vague and shadowy must he be if he is a "poor simp." The story of John Austin should have been related by a kind but caustic onlooker. It was not for nothing that Henry James, who knew the secrets of novelistic form, so often projected people of a delicate rather than vigorous nature through the report of an observer. Or, to take a classic example, how would Ernest Pontifex have looked if Butler had not let his story be told by a prototype of himself, of Samuel Butler? . . . I learned a good deal, at least, from the writing of *Roman Summer:* I finally learned, in fact, the once known but recently deliberately slighted secret of sound fiction: if you want your characters

to live with a more than papery life, let their actions, manners, habits, speech and gestures be perfectly known. Let their interior processes be inferred or surmised.

V

We returned to Vienna invigorated in body and mind, but with a rather sad knowledge of the fact that our charming life there was drawing to a close. Since 1914 no houses had been built in that beautiful stricken city; during the monetary inflation property had to be practically expropriated, since it was impossible for people to pay rent. There was, even with returning stabilization, no incentive for anyone to build. The city administration, to be sure, was erecting model dwellings for working people. But that did not help Thelma and me to get a home of our own. And that was what, above all, we wanted. We were tired of renting apartments of friends who happened to be travelling. We were now living in the home of the Leon Kellners. But late in the fall our friends were coming back from a long visit to their son in Palestine. Then we would probably have to go into hotel rooms again. The thought was too discomforting. I shall mention another curious circumstance. It is hard to conduct business from Vienna. New York treats you as though you had become a myth. We seemed at least to have assumed that character in the mind of Horace Liveright. In these circumstances we took council together and, encouraged by friends who lived there, determined to go to Paris. This was an extremely experi-

mental move. Neither one of us dreamed that it could be as successful as, in the long run, it has proved.

The question may be asked and shall be answered for the last time here: why did we not go home? Because America, undoubtedly our homeland, is, faintly but definitely resembling in this respect the Russia of the Czarist régime, a land of violent contrasts and of an almost complete severance between the beliefs and practices of different strata of the population. It is, on the one hand, the land of a large and growing minority, a saving minority in the strictly Arnoldian sense, inferior in culture, in aspiration, in tolerance and moral freedom to no similar minority in any other land. But official America does not so much as acknowledge the existence of this minority. To the majority that supports official America and to the henchmen who express its will the civilized minority is made up of people whom charity may call mad, but whom good old American morality may as well call criminal, if not—last word of the vindictive barbarian—lewd. One does not have to go home to feel the contempt in which one is held, to grasp official America's total ignorance of American civilization. One goes into a consulate of one's country. The dapper young men are, no doubt, college bred. They have never heard of one. Their courtesy is cold and curt. One's name is not Smith nor is one native-born. They suspect differentness and assume an armour of hostility. . . . Go home? We and our kind by whom perhaps the America of this age will be remembered in the permanent annals of mankind—we and those like us and minded like us are outcasts from the start. Go home? I may write books better than any

I have written, books helpful and sustaining, as every morning's mail proves, to many hundreds, perhaps to thousands of my fellow Americans. Official America will turn a face of impenetrable dulness, of vengeful dulness toward me and bellow: How about your legal situation? Thelma may with the maturing of her powers vie with the art of Roland Hayes or Elena Gerhart. The same stupid question will be hurled at her. Our union may be such as to bring hope to those who have despaired of the marriage relation in our times; it may give courage to love and a fresh impulse to breaking faith. But if we were to go home and travel from New York to Vermont, I might be arrested under a law ostensibly designed for the apprehension of procurers and their victims. . . . Such is in the America of the twentieth century the relation between law and civilized morality. . . .

It will here occur to timid souls that, on this point, good taste might have persuaded me to silence. But in grave matters truth is good taste. For an unpopular but important truth may be helped to prevail by the mere statement of it, by the exposition of the immorality and stupidity of its foes. Nor let it be thought that I am complaining. Things are as they are. Even as man cannot go behind the historic process and say: if these happenings had had other events, the whole trend of things would have been otherwise; so the individual cannot say: had I acted more wisely, had others been more human, life would have had another drift. The homely phrase about spilt milk is a very wise one. Out of the so-ness of things one must get one's rewards and joys.

One may even nurse the hope that one is worthy of such a difficulty of fate as will help, by one's way of living, sustaining, using, interpreting it, others with less power in an equal case. I think that our difficulty, wholly one of the outer and outermost world, unrelated to our union and its fruits, has given us an added strength and grace and fortitude. . . . But it is obvious enough that we could not go home and equally obvious that our remaining abroad has nothing to do with indifference, with an unwillingness to face the harder material conditions of American life or with any hesitation to spend ourselves more than we can do in Europe in the service of our civilization and, primarily, of our own people in America. Whenever a shadowed hour comes to me over this problem it is because life here is too easy and too kind and the shadow is the shadow of the thought that my work for my people in America might be more effectively and more sacrificially done on American soil. . . .

VI

Paris in November was softly grey. But it seemed enormous and without a centre after the adorable intimacy of Vienna. It had something of the showiness of an exposition. Superb but a little flaunting. The elegance was a trifle obvious, the noble symmetry too complete. One reason for this impression was that at first we saw little of the older and quieter parts of the city. Tired of hotels we set out the day after our arrival to find a place to live in and, for once quite like tourists, dropped into a little service-flat in a street

off the Avenue Kleber: excellent steam-heat and a perfect bath-room. The weather was uncommonly severe for Paris and having suffered not a little from cold amid the romantic tile-ovens of Vienna, we snuggled down with delight and relief. The result was that our first experience of the city was more or less confined to the Etoile quarter with its Napoleonic swank and its streets named after victories of the great vulgarian who betrayed the cause of the common people from whom he sprang for the blare of military glory and the pomp of empire. His spirit is all over the quarter of the Etoile, even though it is tempered by the fine French sense for architectural proportion and harmony.

It amuses me today to reflect how innocently we came to Paris. I had always read French and even written a little book long ago on the Symbolist poets. But my imagination had, naturally enough, always sought the countries of German speech. Hence we knew little or nothing of the Paris of the artists nor, more especially, of that cosmopolitan Paris of the American and other invasions. We had never heard of the Café du Dôme; the Carrefour of Montparnasse was an unknown country to us. The Parisian scenes in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* were scenes in an unrealized country and it was not until many months later that, with immense delight, I recognized in the Closerie des Lilas the place in which poor Cronshawe had deliberately drunk himself to death. My first introduction to all these haunts was curious. Pierre Loving declared that I should show myself to the American literati in Paris. A stag party was arranged. The appointed meeting place seemed terribly far away—miles and miles. It was, in fact,

the Restaurant les Trianons on the Place de Rennes, which has one of the best cuisines in Europe and to which we were afterwards formally introduced by our dear friends Jean and Sisley Huddleston. It meant nothing to me that night; I cannot say that I specially observed the food. My friends informed me, however, a little with bated breath, that the reason why they had brought me here was because here Mr. James Joyce was accustomed to dine almost every night. I was delighted at the announcement because I seemed to remember rumours of Mr. Joyce's living in straitened circumstances. That phase was evidently and happily over. Out of the corner of an eye Loving had observed the entrance of Mr. Joyce accompanied by his wife and sister, and having finished our dinner we made our way, a little too much I thought with the air of neophytes approaching the shrine of a sacred mystery, to the Joyce table. Mr. Joyce was, on the contrary, very simple and unassuming. But after a few polite commonplaces he seemed at once to sink fathoms deep into a relieved yet discomforted silence which somehow my mind located behind the pathetic black patch which he still wore over one eye. Miss Joyce chatted comfortably with a pleasant Irish accent and friendly little birdlike gestures. She seemed to be contented with quite casual replies, so that I could quietly observe her brother. It was an emaciated figure that sat there with a mixed air of weariness and determination. Twice he spoke, once to order champagne, which is his only drink, once to reply with a justified testiness to someone's question as to the character of the new work on which he was busy. Both times I was amazed at the resonance of the golden tenor voice that

seemed to echo from his barely covered bones. What fixed itself in my mind above all was not the high narrow forehead, nor the one dark eye, severe and melancholy, but the mouth under the sparse reddish moustache—a thin-lipped, indrawn mouth, bitterish, infinitely tired and repressed, the mouth of an unwilling anchorite, of a flagellant to whom even flagellation had issued in satiety. . . . Later, much later, he told me in our home about his methods of work. Fourteen hours a day at his desk, week in and week out. The product, if all went well, a few pages a week. Inordinate pitiless labour, self-torturing, avid of its aim with an unquenchable avidity, but not ever apparently happy or released or touched by either the story-teller's joy or any other mark of creative freedom. The labour of the man with that high, pure, narrow, fanatical forehead and with that tormented mouth. . . . I do not discuss Mr. Joyce's work here. That would lead me too far; I content myself with certain perceptions which subsequent meetings have not effaced and with a tribute to his gifts, his learning, his indefatigable and sacrificial toil in the service of his ideal. . . . That sense of dedication to an artistic ideal, concerning the value of which opinions may properly be divided, I got from Mr. Joyce on that very first evening and so got, too, indirectly the thing that is historically and still today the chief glory of Paris: her infinitely consenting and fostering atmosphere and attitude to such dedications, to mad dedications in the world of art and thought as such, regardless of their success or failure in any market-place of today or of tomorrow. . . .

From Les Trianons my friends took me at a rather late

hour to the Café Select on the Boulevard du Montparnasse and, whether by chance or design, barricaded me in a corner. And now appeared the Americans of the "quarter." I remember no one who was there that night except Gilbert White, large, comfortable, cynical and witty. What I got as a general impression, which has also not essentially changed, was that the Americans of the quarter, especially the younger among them, did not actively feel that Parisian atmosphere in regard to art and the sacrifices it demanded, but took out a good deal in cocktails and talk and the enjoyment of the blessed moral and intellectual freedom of the Continent not as a means but as an end. . . . Night drifted into morning. I got furiously nervous and very homesick for Thelma. My old and tried men friends are among the chief comforts of my life. But indiscriminate stag parties with much drinking are not for me. I tore myself away a little before four and told the taxi-driver to drive like hell. . . .

VII

Paris began to do me good right away. I was a little reluctant to admit the fact even to myself. It didn't fit into my scheme of things. We went very dutifully to the Comédie Française and to the Odéon and were unbelievably bored. At the Odéon we saw a performance of Daudet's *L'Arlésienne* which, both as a production and as an example of acting, I had not seen matched since my boyhood days of the ten, twenty and thirty cent stock companies of provincial America. Next we went to see a success

by one of the best of the popular playwrights. It was evident that the contemporary French dramas simply didn't exist and that the stage-managers and directors, from an American or German point of view, simply didn't know their business. I recalled certain Theatre Guild productions, Reinhart's production of Hofmannsthal's *Der Schwierige,* a certain Wedekind performance at the Kammerspiele in Berlin, old Bassermann in *Wallensteins Tod.* No, there was no use in going to the theatre in Paris. The opera was on the same plane; the symphony orchestras were not really adequate. We went to the Folies Bergères and to the Casino de Paris. Very handsome and amusing enough. But both Ziegfeld and the management of the Greenwich Village Follies have a discreeter and more subtle touch. Acres of undraped epidermis are, on their own ground, less charming and provocative than a sudden silken thigh or perfect knee. . . . Paris continued to do me good. We discovered the book-quays and began to haunt them as, from time to time, we do still and shall continue to do. I gradually gathered thus interesting sixteenth and seventeenth century editions of all the Latin poets, two or three Aldines, a dozen tiny, thick Elzevirs. It all cost amazingly little. Thelma began to collect old pewter and found and struck remarkable bargains, chaffering in increasingly fluent French. By and by we began, fired by the example of Sholom Asch, to gather Jewish antiques in a modest way and had one bit of luck after another, luck that culminated only the other day in the acquisition of a silver Kiddush cup of eighteenth century relief workmanship, and the cup cost us the price of, let me say, a cheap ready-made frock

or suit in New York. . . . These hobbies—I had never cultivated any before—gave me a real and increasing pleasure. They could not account for the good that Paris was doing me, for the quality of the work which, to my own amazement, I began almost immediately to turn out. . . . The secret of Paris, of France for me as a place of residence and work must have, I recognized early, deeper sources. I did not go in quest of those sources that first winter. I took gratefully the goods that the gods seemed suddenly to provide. Later I went in search of them. I came upon them, too, without searching. Life clarifies itself. To the watchful mind the process of concrete living gives up its secrets. . . .

Always, until we came to France, I had been passionately involved with the country and the civilization in which I lived. In America, in Germany, in Austria—it would be intensely so, of course, in Palestine—I am part of a body, of an organism. Its flesh has grown into mine; its nervous system and my own are inextricably entangled. Prick *it* and I bleed; let it be fevered and I burn; let its nerves throb and I throb too whether in a passion of consent or of resistance. And my implication with these civilizations is twofold, so that I carry a double burden and am wounded by a two-edged spear. For I am, first of all and above all in America, implicated with the general life of the nation and also with its Jewish life. I am the helpless victim of a thousand preoccupations, anxieties, loves, hates, presages, resentments, fears. I burn hot and cold. Injustice is done. Why cannot I hasten to the spot? A good deed is being attempted. Why am I not there to give it my small

strength? My own difficulties are not only my own. They are those of an American, of a Jew in America. They should be met, faced, adjusted, because they are those of an American, of a Jew in America, in order that the wrongs they involve may not be repeated nor my sufferings be multiplied. It is because this Jewish social sense is the dominant note of my mind that I dare write this record and cry out upon wrongs not because they are mine, but because they are wrongs that have come upon others and may come upon still others and that I, as an individual, do not wish to have suffered in vain. In this social consciousness of mine there is no personal merit. None at all. "Rabbi Huna, in the name of Rabbi Joseph, taught: Since the beginning of the world God has been on the side of the persecuted. If a just man persecute a just man, God is on the side of the persecuted. If a wicked man persecute a just man God is on the side of the persecuted. If a wicked man persecute a wicked man God is on the side of the persecuted. But even if a just man persecute a wicked man God is still on the side of the persecuted. In all space as in all time God is on the side of the persecuted." The teaching expressed in this passage will be found embodied in the speech and action recorded in a thousand anecdotes and legends of Jews: of the Talmudic sages of the early Christian centuries in Judæa, in Rome, in Babylon; of mediaeval sages and martyrs without number; of Chasidim holy and profane; of otherwise nameless and fameless men of whom no memory remains save in the private anecdotes of their descendants. I am in this matter of a burning and

troubling social consciousness simply a Jew, a simple Jew among ten thousand others. . . .

It is evident, to come to the daily bread of life, that a temper of this sort does not conduce to tranquillity of life or continuity of artistic productivity. When I left America, I thought I should have peace. At the end of eighteen months in Vienna I found myself by natural sympathy of speech and tradition and friendships, by appeals made to me and advice asked of me and problems pressed upon me almost as hotly involved as I had been at home. Paris had an immediate lovely coolness for me, a refreshing objectivity. The life of France is outside of me like a charming picture. I admire it; I enjoy it; I have a high as well as an intimate appreciation of it, as I would have—that figure remains the best—for a work of art in a highly esteemed but radically alien tradition. The figures in the picture do not draw me into their midst; the lightnings in the background will never strike my heart. The world about me is objective to me. I cease to experience and give myself wholly to contemplation and productivity. I am self-contained at last. I cultivate my garden. I have written my best books, such as they are, in France.

It is my good luck, as it is perhaps that of other foreigners living in France, that from my point of view—I do not presume to judge from within—French civilization lacks the note of ultimate spiritual intensity. One cannot quite imagine a French Milton or Beethoven or Tolstoi. One cannot quite imagine a French Isaiah or Spinoza. The youngest French men of letters, the least prejudiced people in the world, still recognize men like Romain Rolland and

Henri Barbusse as subtly un-French in temper. Even the French Communist leaders are singularly unprophetic in the quality of their minds and gestures. They are no hot saviours of society. When, for the hundredth time M. Paul Vaillant-Couturier is clapped in jail, he spends his time painting pictures. I have no doubt that the warden makes appreciative comments. Moderation, good sense, a serious but not too serious preoccupation with the amenities of life pervades all classes and all callings. This temper has its, to me, unbelievable side. I am convinced that a not uncultivated Frenchman, having heard the Ninth Symphony, is capable of saying: *Comme c'est joli!* Heaven knows that with one side of me I envy him his ability to make that comment. We others, to speak in the French fashion, are forever on an altitude. We wear our souls out. Have we bettered the world? What true hope, what essential progress is there on the horizon? Vain questions. We are what we are and do what we must. But these wise, cool, undramatic French people have made a pact with mortality and its limitations. That is *bon sens*. That is its highest and surely not unphilosophical meaning. Thence their thrift and their effort to be secure; thence, once more, the attempt of the poorest to give life a pleasant aesthetic polish if only by good cooking and the flavour of a country wine. There are, of course, other phenomena in the complex life of a nation. There is a good deal of outwardly polite but inwardly ruthless chauvinism which crops out even in the Socialist papers; there are such things as the neo-Catholic movement in literature; a few furiously nationalistic and anti-Semitic books, such as the recent *Le Péril d'Israél*, con-

tinue to appear. But one is very sure all the time that these are phenomena belonging to quite special and restricted groups. These things are not in any sense pervasive. One lives in Paris and wanders through the country and never, by any chance, comes upon even the faintest expression of them. The people, as a whole, are not excited. They are busy with concrete and practical and pleasant things and want neither to destroy nor to save. Thus too all governmental processes that touch one—and they are reduced to a sane minimum—are courteous, easy-going, not over-stringent. Tolerance is pervasive, an instinctive politeness that lets others alone. If you say something agreeable about France, people glow mildly but genuinely. But you are never made to feel that the tribute of compliment is exacted. Your speaking of French is received with a smile, an unfailing smile, of the most genial tolerance. That you will never speak their charming language even bearably goes without saying. But that you, a mere foreigner, express yourself as adequately as you do is highly commendable and entitles you to every courtesy and consideration. Certain it is, too, that you are rarely cheated, that tradesmen who know you at all will beg for the permission to trust you and that even your inborn foreign thriftlessness is not too often turned to your disadvantage. The people are self-contained, self-respecting, tolerant, not meddlesome. On high occasions these qualities rise to those occasions. The refugee from the disgrace of Fascist barbarism is safe in France; the Jew Schwarzbard who assassinated the arch-pogromist Petlura on a Parisian street was acquitted by a French jury not on the question of his guilt, concerning

which there was no doubt, but on the unspeakable record of the counter-revolutionary general. Neither the cry of Jew nor the cry of Bolshevik was raised. It is such moments, it is such incidents that still vindicate the claim of France to be the country of freedom and humanity. In brief, her moderation can rise to the height of justice, her good sense to that of wisdom, her easy tolerance to that of true liberty. . . .

No wonder that Paris began to do me good almost at once. Objective, cool, ordered, tolerant, this remarkable and admirable civilization is rest, background, contrast, refreshment. It has taught me the use of the pleasant things of life as a release and relief from the fierce preoccupations of the spirit; it has made it possible for me to pursue certain ends in thought and art, in peace. Paris has, of course, the tradition of guarding the exile. Once it was Heine, today it is Merejkowski. Nor has its hospitality to us been lacking in a more personal warmth. The music critics of Paris have shown a profound appreciation of Thelma's art despite her specialization in German and Jewish music; several of my books are being simultaneously translated into French and articles about me have appeared in some of the best reviews. But my chief tribute to France must be the work I have done here—work long planned, long deferred, executed at last here and not yet, I trust, at an end.

Chapter Five: Workshop

I

THE soft grey sky of a Paris winter shut me in. At last life lost some of its urgency. One could wander about the streets and along the book-quays on the Seine or sit at a café-table out of doors even in winter and cultivate inner quietude and revery. A small group of friends soon gathered about us, old and new ones, but they too seemed untouched by any feverishness and hardly interrupted the current of one's thoughts and visions. And mine were such as I had not had before and I instinctively knew that I must cultivate them, or rather be as passive to them as possible. For they were both absorbing and tranquil; real and yet liberated from reality; as concrete as earth or wood or brass but assuming a form that seemed to me to raise them above space and time and circumstance into an eternal and intelligible world in which they could be added to the legendary histories and sorrows of mankind. And that is the test. Here, at this point, lies the dividing line between art and reporting. At this point, too, commences the distinction between what is ephemeral and what is permanent. All art consists of the stuff of experience. The question is: Into what, without being contorted, has that stuff been transformed or transmuted? Not changed! Character, incident, shape, colour, landscape—all may be strictly those of reality, and indeed the artist need have had little consciousness but that of precisely rendering reality. But if he is

an artist his inner feeling of what constitutes precision will raise his *mimesis,* his imitation of life, into a region above life. His product will be, in a definite sense, more like life than life itself—this is neither jest nor paradox—in that it will shape completely where life's hand slipped and bring out hidden meanings missed by the hot hour of experience and add to incident and character the fruit of meditation and later insight. The artistic process does more: it conceives this clarified and completed substance in terms of form—form which is, in this sense, next to impossible to define, for it is an unanalyzable building of structure toward an identity of significance and rhythm, of meaning and music. . . . The artist works at this form; this and this alone is the substance of his labour. He regards the stuff of experience which he is using, though it was once the beating of his very heart, the rending of his very nerves, with cold objectivity and uses it calmly to build the structure of form that is some day, he hopes, to stand against the sky. . . . The passion that he feels during the creative process is not the echo or the shadow of the passions that he uses in his work: as passions they are dead to him. What shakes him now is the passion of his form, the tremor of eternity. Upon him blows a cold yet ardent wind from other spheres. Hence, though not hence only, the mean absurdity of the strutting manikins out in the world of the perishable who say to the artist: You have used me as material: that is I and I will not have it. Is it indeed "you"? Then it is a "you" to which you have no right, which you could never have seen or created, a transcendent "you," a "you" wrought into an eternal substance unimaginable to the "you" that,

in humble fact, you are. . . . Here is the crux and here the essence of criticism: how does experience become art? The rest is elegant gossip. Or rhetoric for beginners. Or a game. . . .

The question of success or failure turns upon the same point. Has experience become art? Is the transformation complete? Has the permanent been abstracted from the unorganized mass of reality? These questions at once reveal the necessary uncertainties of contemporary judgment. For the contemporaries of a work of art are not passive enough. They know its substance too intimately from their own experience and inject into it their own feelings, perceptions, memories. Thus to them it becomes factualized again and they do not see the work of art for its subject-matter. It is not time that gives high art its legendary and eternal quality; time merely brings out that quality in high art by hushing the rumours and stilling the passions and covering with forgetfulness the incidents amid which it arose. A great work may seem to its immediate contemporaries a gossipy *roman à clef* or a hardly disguised autobiography and it may, in the lower sense of these contemporaries, be either the one or the other. Let but a few years pass; its universal and high legendary character will stand revealed. We have seen precisely that happen within two decades to two books—to Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and to Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. Nor does Mann deny that *Buddenbrooks* is the history of his family or Maugham that *Of Human Bondage* is an account of his first thirty years. There is no reason why they should, for they have wrought experience into art.

There is already left no one so foolish as to think that the shade of the prototype of Toni Buddenbrook has been offended or that the model from whom Mildred was drawn should sue for libel. . . .

I come to a final and fascinating question: can the artist himself know whether in a given work he has transformed experience into art? And the immediate answer on the plane of practical life must be no, of course he cannot. But he is not quite so rudderless as this answer seems to imply. For, at least in his maturity, he comes to see that success or failure in his particular undertaking is not due wholly to what the world calls talent—to that fairly widespread specialized co-ordination which makes it possible for so many to write prose or verse or cover canvases with paint in an agreeable or even startling fashion. He comes to see that, though he too must possess that specialized co-ordination, his aim and task, his success or failure upon his plane, have to do primarily with his relation to life, with his personal dealings with both man and God. Without arrogance, with a certain sadness in fact, he sees much talent cluttering the already crowded earth with books and pictures which have a touch of charm, of novelty, of interest, but are like the leaves of autumn in a strong wind because their authors have only talent and are only what the polite world calls "artists." So, for himself, he is almost ready to repudiate that name, to repudiate the very name of art when he hears it used by opera singers and painters of still life. Not that he disdains these agreeable entertainers. But he wants, for his own sake as well as for the sake of others, above all, since man is a valuing animal, for the sake of the

values involved, to keep the issue clear. He too has once learned his craft, his technique; he was young once. Now its practice has become second nature; his style or manner has become the definite expression of his personal moods and rhythms. He rarely gives it a thought. His is another and severer business: to grasp his personal experience and observation in such a way as to leave it wholly concrete and yet make it significant to all men; to remain himself and yet to universalize himself through the expressed or implied co-ordination of his experience with universal moods and sufferings and aspirations; to sacrifice himself to the uttermost and to be in the end, in the long run, only a symbol and a flame upon the altar. Man and artist he must die in order to live. *Stirb und werde!* . . . Does he know, I asked, whether he is successful or not, whether he has managed to transform experience into art? Well, he can give a shrewd guess from the condition of his inner man whether he is on the road—a road not without hardship and dread—or not. He can give a guess from the measure and the quality of his inner passion and discipline, from the completeness with which he identifies himself with all his characters, from the strength of his sense of what may be called the eternal relationships, even from the character of his personal life. . . . He can give a guess whether, success or failure in a high sense, he lives at the lonely centre or on the crowded periphery. . . . Hence his essential carelessness of criticism, which is often called arrogance, and his eagerness, seeing that art is sacrifice and suffering, to get for himself and those dear to him the very small material rewards which sound work brings. . . . It is the dilettante and the

artificer who is upset by an unfavourable review but declares that art is its own reward.

II

In our little service flat on the Rue St. Didier we had an absurdly small salon in which stood a proportionately small writing-table. Scarcely a week after we had settled there I sat down one morning at that writing-table and wrote without hesitation or erasure the first thousand words of a novel. My conscious mind had planned this novel only in the vaguest way. I find half-a-dozen (literally only that many) notations in the neat note-books which it amuses me to buy and keep on my desk but which I almost never use. These notations consist of the phraseology employed by the character that was to be the chief character in the story. So I had played with the idea of some day, very far away, writing a fictional account of certain people and events both in order, perhaps, to cleanse my own bosom at last of that perilous stuff, but also and more definitely to project people and incidents which, though universal enough in ultimate moral significance, could in these forms and after this fashion be met in America alone. I had played with the idea both as self-expression and as form, or, rather, as interpretative expression through form. What had been mainly in my mind in its uncertain gropings had been that, if ever I did write this story, I wanted to get into it a certain tone of severity, a tonic strictness, a sobriety with an implication of the sublime, which all my favourite fictions seemed to possess, but which I did not think any modern

American novelist had tried for. Dreiser knows of the existence of this precise quality, but his thick wordiness—great writer that he is for all that—stands between him and his actual achievement of it. Lewis wants vigour and the ironic palpable hit at every moment and at any price, Hergesheimer wants elegance and pathos and, at his best, wistfulness. Various other novelists, all able and gifted, want psychological research or wit or curious and colourful patterns in their stories. Most of them want, on a higher or lower plane, effectiveness in detail or strangeness or decorativeness of detail and very few of them have a very exact feeling for the special quality of a whole. Now this quality of severity which I dreamed of is not easily defined. It admits humour, since Fielding has it, and irony too, as we see in *The Way of All Flesh;* it admits the highest philosophical speculations as we see in Thomas Mann and can be achieved by a comparatively limited mind, as we are taught by the example of Flaubert. An author can recognize it and conquer it, as Somerset Maugham has done, in one or two books (*Of Human Bondage* and *On a Chinese Screen*) and then lose it or not labour for it again. If I say that Swift has severity, the quality will be confused with pessimism or mere sombreness. But Milton has it too. Many great writers do not have it and I do not pretend that it is the greatest of all qualities but only the one, above all others, that I wanted at least once to approach. It requires, in order to be present in any given work, that that work be built largely and clearly but not intricately. The style must be sober and translucent and follow a straight line. If it is highly wrought, as in Milton, there must constantly

shimmer through the scholarly scrupulousness that curbs and controls the magnificence. But in modern prose it had better be plain and even at moments of high emotional tension use well-known words in the manner long approved in good speech and writing. One touch of singularity will ruin all. Originality must inhere in the experience and the vision and the aim. But however plain the manner is (and it had better be plain) and however humble the incidents and however trivial or even vulgar the characters, the reader must feel and not need to be told, but *feel* at every moment, that places and people and events have been perceived at the same instant in their concretest reality and under the aspect of eternity. If there is delineated, let us say, a quarrel between two people, a wretched, material, foolish human quarrel, there need not be a single word that seems to go beyond the humble subject in hand nor any word that looks another way. But the attentive reader must feel that the author sees those two quarrelling people as mortal, as dust, against the background of all human suffering and perplexity, against the background of the unfathomable world.

Well, I had no particular reason for supposing that it would be given me to embody in any piece of writing the qualities I happen most to admire. I am myself the severest critic of my books and know their weak points better than any reviewer. I simply played with the idea of some day—how indeterminate that day was—writing a severe, detached narrative of human lives and passions against the implied back-ground of eternal issues. . . . In our little salon in Paris all these theoretical notions dropped from

me. I wrote a thousand words the first day and the second and the third. I read my daily stint to Thelma, who thought the narrative was succeeding and put aside her own work and plans in order to give me the undivided help of her sympathy and tranquillity. I made no more notes nor any sketches, but put down the story as it flowed —the word is hardly a figure of speech—unpremeditatedly from my pen. At the end of four months and a half I had written without pause or hesitation the one hundred and fifty thousand words that constitute *The Case of Mr. Crump*. . . . What had happened was evidently this, that in the detachment and the peace which I found in Paris things that had been working themselves out and ripening primarily in my subconsciousness for years, reached the point of condensation or precipitation—halting but useful analogies—and that the book wrote itself measurably, at least, under the guidance of my notion of what a novel should be. I had, immediately at all events, the conviction that here was the best thing I had ever done, that here, if ever, if at all, I had, according to my own notions, transmuted experience into art. The umbilical cord had been cut. As life the thing was in the past—gone, disappeared forever. As art, I hoped and my hope has not since remained unconfirmed, it belonged to the legendary, the detached, the universal.

III

Spring brought the annoyance of evil machinations at home in America, in which the powers and principalities of the

world again ranged themselves against us. It also brought us a new home, a studio apartment in Montparnasse and a long visit from Charles Recht. Paris seemed even friendlier so near to that Carrefour of Montparnasse, which has in recent years become the most cosmopolitan cross-roads in the world. I am much more impressed by its picturesqueness and the stimulation of its many-languaged interests than by its importance in the world of art. For this picturesque little world either drifts or rather idly experiments; if it had something to say, a secret in its soul that must by all means be uttered, it would not so wearily play with the mere devices of technique. If its moral nihilism is as complete as in the hard but very able delineations of Ernest Hemingway it has, of course, passed the point at which communicable experience is possible. I found, at all events, that except on the ground of mere human friendliness I had little in common with the "expatriates." Among the quite young there may be the promise of both inner seriousness and artistic accomplishment. Youth always has the chance of being right. Among those whose youth is behind them I find uncertainty and premature decay. The uprooted have nothing to say. They live in a kind of limbo. For one reason or another they have fled from their normal world; they have not allied themselves with another nor built another in their souls. For a little warmth they huddle together. . . . There are exceptions, like the earnest and extremely gifted sculptor, Roy Sheldon. But there are middle-aged painters who have not yet found their line and writers whose books are all ahead of them. They talk with awe of that ex-quarterite Ezra Pound because once,

long ago, he wrote some strangely lovely verses. He, though now in Italy, is the type of the best of the expatriates: a scholar, a poet once, a man of eccentric tastes and eccentric life. How late and dreary that whole attitude of feebly baiting the bourgeoisie. And among all of them not one brave action nor one heroic work that, by its very being, will break or transform the society and the spirit against which their protest is directed. Here I come upon the error of the Bohemian, the expatriate, his error and his weakness. America will not heed him; no strong society would. His jibes and gestures and quaint, confusedly innovating little pamphlets and periodicals will pass unnoticed, and rightly so, except by the curious or by his fellows. It takes another mode of life, another discipline than his to produce those works which, by their depth and power, will reshape man and nature even and human life. There will be in these works no emphatic innovation of form, nor any mere singularity; there will be no tricks or poses or gesticulatory devices. These works will never be, as the current critical slang has it, contrived in one fashion or another. They will grow out of great curbed passions, great researches, austere and shattering thoughts. . . . We were present at the meeting in Paris, a meeting long desired and long deferred, of Thomas Mann and Dmitri Merejkowski. Against a bright window the simple, dark silhouette of Mann with conventional hair-part and moustache and clothes and that complete tranquillity in the service of the highest creative thought which he has wrung from an immense capacity for suffering, from an immense and morbid nervous sensibility. What are the light vagaries

and shallow pains of the fluttering, floating, innovating Bohemian to the early sorrows and conflicts that inspired *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice*—to the conflict, so magnificently resolved later on—between responsibility to life and responsibility to art? Opposite Mann, gravely happy husband and father, great artist and responsible citizen, Merejkowski, a small, hunched, grizzled, almost fleshless old man. The other, the anchorite type, utterly withdrawn from the uses and appetites of the practical world, burning in his work and through his work alone. Both Mann and Merejkowski leading a life of a classical mould, of a complete pattern, without whims, vagaries, accidents. Their verbal communication was difficult. Neither is glib, neither is a facile linguist. But they understood each the other and found that both were plunging back into remote Oriental antiquity to seek creatively the origins of much that throbs so wildly in the world today. Both live and work, and hence their power over both life and art, under the aspect of permanent forces and imperishable thoughts. This does not, by the way, make them morose or inhuman. It is the straining Bohemian experimenter who is "highbrow" and babbles about art. Mann and Merejkowski touched on history, politics, personalities, their liking for each other's works, their concrete plans.

I found and find myself, to sum the matter up, in my modest way a little remote from the "quarter" as such. Its preoccupations are not mine; its ways are not mine. I find that I want more bourgeois responsibilities, not fewer, more order and dignity of life even in external things, not less. I thrive and my work thrives under these conditions. I

want to be more bound—so the bonds be rationally chosen —never less. And so I am from the beginning not wholly in a mood that is sympathetic to the expatriates of America. My case and the case of some of my special friends is different from theirs. Sholom Asch and Marvin Lowenthal and I are, in a sense, in exile too. But it is our special exile; it is *Galuth* in Europe as in America. We carry our "binding," our "religio," our ultimate country and our people's history and aspiration in our breasts.

IV

The manuscript of *The Case of Mr. Crump* had gone to the office of the publishers and a member of the firm, a very great friend of mine, had cared for the book very deeply. But for a number of weeks I heard nothing and then heard suddenly that this friend of mine, accompanied by still another member of the firm with whom my friendship was even older, was in Paris and that an immediate conference was necessary. We met at Larue's opposite the Madeleine and I observed at once that both of my friends had a slightly crestfallen look. There was something they wanted to tell me and hated to tell me; they both had the fine and just feeling that what they were about to say had again to do with the impenetrable stupidity, the inexpugnable vulgarity of the world from which, as they knew, men of my type bear, at best, a hundred hidden scars. But there was nothing for it but at last to come out with the cold fact: the firm's lawyers had absolutely vetoed the publication of *The Case of Mr. Crump* . . . My friends fell silent. They

wanted to give me time to recover from the blow. In fact, though I foresaw at once a number of not exactly agreeable consequences: no profit from a winter's work, the indefinite postponement of a vacation: I was not as hard hit as my friends supposed. I had an immediate feeling that this circumstance was somehow harmonious with my life and character and the fate of this particular book and I instantly determined to ask Thelma's mother, who was visiting us at the time and had read the manuscript, to help me with the expenses of a private edition. . . . The thing, in itself, was of course unbelievably absurd. Whether the book was as good as at certain moments I hoped, the book's material had unquestionably undergone the condensation and interpretative transformation that forever divides art from reporting and imaginative justice from scandalmongering. I also knew from my experience of legal processes in America that it has an iron seal fastened to a trip-hammer. The hammer descends. All that is human and veracious is obliterated. When the original cause and its living proponents are destroyed justice is said to have been done.

I went home and told my story and Thelma's mother offered her help before I asked for it. Turning the matter over in my mind, however, I saw no reason why my book should not, like *Ulysses,* utterly different in kind and character though it was, be published by an American publisher in Paris. Hence I sought out Mr. Edward W. Titus, who had just started his well-chosen and tastefully printed series of limited editions. Titus read the book and immediately offered to bring out a handsome edition of five hundred copies at his own expense. It was a very great service.

For I would have felt with the utmost keenness the failure of my manuscript to reach the finality of a permanent record.

The printing proceeded without undue delay. By early winter we were able to send out a very few copies to friends. They responded with the utmost generosity—Carl Van Doren and Mencken, William Ellery Leonard and Joseph Wood Krutch, Sinclair Lewis and Sisley Huddleston. Orders began to come in for copies; I did not know then how soon both German and French translations of the book were to appear; my moral satisfaction was quite complete. I planned how I would make up the loss of money involved. The book existed now not only on paper but in the consciousness of a few wise and gifted contemporaries. If a man did not have a living to earn he would ask for no more in the case of any book. But now rumours came to us, first from Saint Louis, next from Baltimore, that copies sent to subscribers had been held up by the Post Office. A friend of my work, a Jewish lawyer in Baltimore, took it upon himself to investigate. *The Case of Mr. Crump* had been declared unmailable by the Post Office Department. My unknown friend in Baltimore appealed to the department's solicitor and sent that gentleman quotations concerning the book from distinguished critics and periodicals. The reply that came from the office of the solicitor of the Post Office Department said: "The views of men of letters, contemporary or otherwise, are entitled to due respect, but this office must be governed by the views of the Federal courts as to what constitutes obscenity within the meaning of Section

211 of the Federal Criminal Code in passing upon matters coming before it."

I had the feeling, when I read this letter, that a fantastic element was being introduced into the relations between my country and myself. It was clear that according to the powers that rule us I could do nothing right and that there was no health in me. Between those powers and myself there seemed no possibility of peace. Very early in life I had had a most harmless little book confiscated by Comstock's officers; during the war I had been ostracized for insisting mildly enough on facts which no clever schoolboy thinks of denying today; when I tried to sanitate my moral life I was driven into exile. Now I had written a book, a thoroughly American book which the best thoroughly American critics were declaring an artistic work of no ordinary importance, and there leaped out of ambush the redoubtable solicitor brandishing Section 211 of the Federal Criminal Code. . . . I don't know what that paragraph contains; I do know, and my friends and critics will bear me out that, in a strictly philosophical sense, *The Case of Mr. Crump* is a work of the severest moral idealism in which again and again definite concepts of good and of evil are brought into confrontation, a book whose strain of moral thought and experience culminates in the reflections of Herbert Crump beside the body of his father: "Herbert sat beside his dead father and casual beholders might have thought that he showed little feeling. But he was considering with an immeasurable pain within, a pain that reached out after and questioned fate itself, how different, how really sweet and mellow life could have been for his father and

mother if he had married an ordinarily suitable, kind, helpful mother of children of his own. Herbert thought of his friends in the world of art and of the intellect who scoffed at the Philistine virtues and who said that to understand everything was to forgive it too. Ah, he knew better. Those friends of his possessed the fundamental virtues—veracity, mercy, unselfishness—and were therefore entitled to research and experiment in the moral world. But he had insight into a region where those virtues had not yet been reached. Foul, unimaginable shapes could curl up like wraiths from that world. Goodness and honour—those were the names of salvation. He knelt beside his father who had been both good and honourable, knelt there long and arose and kissed that icy forehead." . . . O learned counsel, can we not in this late age consign you at last to the oblivion that gathers mercifully about your more menacing predecessors of the witch-court and the heresy trial? Is it not late for you to be still blinking in the sun and making your absurd gestures under Betelgeuse? What did you find that offended you under your important Section 211 of your falsely orotund Federal Criminal Code? You, learned counsel, are doubtless a most estimable citizen, a faithful husband, a kind father, a strict observer of your country's laws, pure of the contamination of the bootlegger, obedient to the Volstead act! Yet have not you—search your conscience, estimable counsel—have not you in moments of private honest wrath ever said that such and such a Bolshevik or foreigner was scarcely (using the classical phrase which fear of you forbids me to write) of human descent? And yet you do and can forbid me to print these phrases? When shall we deliver America, not

of you, O learned counsel, but of your power? For you sit in all the seats of the mighty, in executive and legislative chambers, in all the departments of the State, in the high chairs of judges. Year in and year out you have dogged my footsteps and footsteps of many like me, determined that America and American life shall have no freedom nor beauty nor creative power nor leave any memorial of having been. We are much stronger than you, O weak and violent solicitors, and you will only be remembered because we choose, now and again, to mention you. But it is getting late in the world's age for you. Mankind has work to do. Be humble and useful and become herders of sheep. You will retain authority, but it will do no harm.

V

With the composition of *The Case of Mr. Crump* I had for the present released and made objective the experiences and observations of American life that beat against my consciousness. I had written, as a Jewish mind and character, of course, a wholly American book. I now felt profoundly that henceforth my activity must lie largely in another direction. For I had long ago come to the conclusion that the inner poverty of a number of Jewish writers in various modern literatures came from the fact that they refused out of assimilatory shamefacedness to use the only material which they knew at first hand and from within. My own case the accidents of fortune had rendered somewhat different, for my immersion in American Gentile life had for many years been quite complete. I had, in fact, been most

unhappily cut off from my own people. Nevertheless it is open to question whether in art, as in life, instinct is not more important than material, the character of consciousness than its contents, the stream of the blood than the shapes and gestures of the world, the perceiver than the thing perceived. In view of the high demonstrable subjectivity of all human perceptions, this question is a very weighty one. Even in *The Case of Mr. Crump* where landscape, speech, gesture, incident, above all character, are American, the particular quality of the fusing moral passion is doubtless Jewish. . . . The names of the Jewish writers whose work had long seemed to me impoverished by their refusal to use Jewish material are not very familiar in America. But a few will recognize the thinness in the later work of men like Georg Hirschfeld and Georg Herrmann, the unnecessarily feeble fantasies of Ludwig Fulda, the sudden extinction, after a brief flowering, of the talent of Georges de Porto-Riche. From America I had neither example nor instruction to draw. In view of our numbers in the United States, our contribution to literature is excessively small. Perhaps it is because the majority of us have not been in America long enough. Or else, we share the general American immersion in the mechanics of life. That is, we share it imitatively; a post-imitative period will come. Yet I have, upon reflection, an American example too. . . . My friend is a playwright, a man of the nimblest wit, of a most precise yet plastic feeling for dramatic form, of an aware and incisive intellect. But both his intellect and his sensibilities are aware on one side only; they are aware only to what in American life has wounded, outraged and disgusted

him. Hence his three best plays of which two, alas, have never been performed, are ironic with an acrid and corrosive irony. They are stripped of any perception but those of misery, folly, confusion. I will not say that the misery, the folly, the confusion do not exist exactly as my friend delineates them, even though there exists a reasonable doubt whether his Jewish way of seeing them is the only way in which they can be seen. I, at all events, see them as he does. But he is in a blind alley, face to face with a grey and hopeless and impenetrable wall. An artist cannot live upon an angry scorn of fools or upon his revulsion from a civilization which he sees, after all, from the outside. Strictly from the outside. My friend is a New Yorker; his friendships and associations are overwhelmingly Jewish. He has never had any of the inner experiences which, alien to him and me as they may be, exist—exist and are the substance that feeds this civilization. Without them it would crumble. Strong, magnificent, overwhelming it stands before us. How foolish and feeble the angriest gibe! But from any suspicion of these truths my friend withdraws himself with a morbid, with a hectic and timid eagerness. He will not admit that the consciousness with which he perceives things thus and so is a Jewish consciousness; he will not let a Jewish thought or a scrap of Jewish knowledge enter his mind or the mind of his children. Surrounded by Jews, he is in perpetual flight from his Jewishness and yet has nothing but his inimitably Jewish reaction to a world he does not love, but to which he clings with a strange negative ferocity. "Where thou canst not love—pass by!" said Nietzsche. And the Talmudic sages emphasize again and again the sin of

putting one's fellow man to shame. "But Swift," my friend will object, "or, if you will, Isaiah." Ah, what a different matter. Swift included in his satire the whole human race which seemed to him to fall dreadfully and tragically short measured by those strong and lofty and passionate ideals which, as a Christian and an English gentleman, he bore so securely in his breast. And the spirit of Isaiah brought from the Eternal himself the measure by which the people of God was to be measured. And my friend? By what ideal of his own—compelling as love or hunger, terrible as a flame—does America fall short? And is that ideal within him, in the name of which he exercises his indignation, an ideal that belongs to America and by which America can rationally be measured? I have only to ask these questions to exhibit both the philosophic and artistic barrenness of my friend's methods and results. And now that he has rid himself of his, let us grant, justified spleen against an environment that never suited his Jewish temper, what now? Does he now turn to the present life and incomparably tragic and dramatic past of his own people in order to create work of positive content, work to which his blood and his instincts can assent? Does he now, having been a brilliant metropolitan satirist, strive to become a poet? Unluckily no. He manufactures hokum. He will not be a Jew; he will not be himself. Whenever in our house conversation turned upon Jewish matters my friend and his charming and intelligent wife withdrew themselves visibly, palpably, into an inner prison which they had sedulously built about their souls. What would they be? Americans in a deep sense? Surely not. Jews? Their whole life is

a flight from that. What then? Nothing! My friend tried to argue one night that the great poets of the nations had no national characteristics that made them, however ultimately transcendent, both expressive and representative of their peoples. To such depths of absurdity can frightened Jewish cosmopolitanism descend. At all events my friend who started out, I believe, more richly endowed than any other American playwright, seems to have nothing more to say.

Shall a Jew not write about Gentile life? Is he to be confined to Jewish subjects? No, I mean no such absurdity. But he must be, like every artist, united with his subject-matter by ultimate love and, so far as possible, instinctive understanding. There were years in which, had fate been different and kinder, I could have written stories about Methodists in the South, not sharing their superstitions, to be sure, but knowing from within the spiritual realities that did, in human fact, guide and sustain them, exposing hypocrisy too in its place but not losing sight of that core of genuineness without which religions, social orders and groups would simply disintegrate and disappear. Whoever does not possess from within that knowledge of people may write of them wittily and acridly and astonishingly; he will never touch his subject creatively or richly: "Where thou canst not love—pass by!"

For myself I must not say that I came to a decision. For a decision means the weighing of contrary, often of contradictory ways or thoughts or acts. The spirit and the history of my people came flooding my mind and heart in stronger and more brimming waves; it became literally unimaginable to me that I, too, had once been or seemed to

have been so alienated and estranged. An hundred stories out of our past and present came to me. And here I did not have to hesitate or doubt concerning the relation between the perceiver and the thing perceived; I did not only study, I—this I that I am and that is in a thousand ways but a summing up of a past—remembered. And in regard to things contemporary I also knew that I did not so meticulously have to observe or so directly to experience. I could substitute imagination, when necessary, for observation. For in regard to Jewish matters I imagined correctly and in accordance with reality. Thus I have been much commended recently for my delineation of a certain Jewish milieu and atmosphere in New York. A friend swore the other day that he hesitated to visit a particular family; the resemblance was too ghastly. Now I have never, in fact, personally known people of that type, never entered the kind of house I describe, never therefore seen my characters in action. I have seen them in the streets, in the theatres, in the subway. That is all. It is enough. I know my Jews. . . .

VI

The subject of the novel which I called *The Defeated,* but which was to be called *The Island Within,* had been in my mind for some years. And all that time I had also felt, rather than known, that I wanted to break the too tight form of the modern novel. It had, one may reply, already been broken. Not from my point of view. For I desired to emulate neither the interior dialogists nor any other of

the new ultra-subjectivists. They were very honourably and praiseworthily trying to press closer to reality. But, alas, a stream of consciousness is not a human being and art is, after all, communication. Art exists for man. If by creative speech I cannot reach my fellows I had better adopt some more useful business. And the proofs are in, are they not, that the directest and most moving communication is achieved by two methods: by direct speech from writer to reader, such as the direct speech of the essayist, the philosopher or the preacher, or by the creation of concrete, visible human beings undergoing upon some intelligible spiritual terms their more or less universal fates. And these two methods had been blended before. They had been blended by the epic poets and, in direct imitation of the epic poets, by Henry Fielding. I did not, heaven knows, announce this theory to my acquaintances at the cafés Select and Dôme who were busy destroying speech itself as a method of communication. Or so at least it inevitably seems to me. But I did more and more strongly have a vision of a novel which, filled with all the substance of modernity or, in other words, equal to its age as all sound work has always been, might yet—*mutatis mutandis*—employ certain permanent, tested, permanently effective modes of structure and expression. It might, among other things, avoid the lightlessness and airlessness of so many otherwise fine modern works; it might the more readily and with no loss at all of humble reality once more succeed in representing man as playing the play of his life upon a scene whose backdrop is, according to science even more than according to religion, eternity and infinity. It might with propriety touch upon ultimate

mysteries in both the world and the soul; it might compass more of both space and time and thus introduce—contrary to the modern method of isolation—the commanding considerations of heritage, blood, historic continuity. . . . Well, I was under no illusion concerning my present ability to write the novel, the epic narrative of which I had a vision. For one thing I did not know enough. Neither did I have the leisure or the money. Thomas Mann took seven years to write *The Magic Mountain*. No one evidently was going to support us for seven years. *The Case of Mr. Crump* had changed for the present from an asset to a liability. For the publishers had given me an advance royalty which was now a debt that had to be paid. But they had liked the book very much and naturally asked for another "full-length" novel. A fitting period seemed then to have arrived to write in something like the form I had in mind that preliminary study toward the ultimate Jewish "matter" on which, if time and strength and freedom were given me, I hoped some day to try the modern art of epic narrative. *The Island Within* was that preliminary study, though even here I was impelled to introduce—as a not inorganic part of the fable, I trust—a fragment of that unexampled wealth of historic and legendary material which is part of the untouched heritage of Israel.

It is from this wealth of material that the substance and the inspiration of memorable works will some day be drawn. At present it is, as I have said, untouched. The modern Jew has deliberately emptied his mind of Jewish things. He knows concerning St. Simeon Stylites and has not heard the name of Akiba. The reign of Hadrian evokes in his

mind the story of Antinous, not of that last Jewish war under Bar Kochba from which arose in ultimate consequences the deathless folk of the diaspora. He has not heard of the Rabbis of the early Christian centuries, those fathers who in their lives and sayings illustrated the subtlest and serenest wisdom that man had yet known. He is more likely to know something of Athanasius and Origen and the monks of the Libyan desert. . . . It is, of course, not entirely his fault if he happens to be a one-languaged American. The Semitologists, rabbinical or lay, regard their knowledge as a professional matter, not as a national possession. There are no mediators between knowledge and the people. Moreover, the ignoble English in which a good deal of work is done robs the substance itself of all persuasive power. On this ground Jewish history, wisdom, legend has naturally to compete in the modern world with the possessions of the Gentiles. But it is an error to suppose, as may easily be done, that literary power abandoned the Jewish people after, let us say, the composition of the so-called apocryphal books. Poetry died until its later flowering in Spain. But wisdom and legend lived a continuous life and even in the driest *Mishna* there often sounds, across quibbling and dead substance, a laconic, passionate, eternally Jewish as well as human voice. . . .

VII

I did not begin the new book until winter, after all. Various minor tasks were necessary, among them the comple-

tion of my last book of essays: *Cities and Men*. Moreover, for Americans living in Paris and unwilling to lose touch with home, early summer is a busy and often a delightful season. Sooner or later all one's friends appear and at that season, though not at that season only, Thelma and I became accustomed to practising a fairly large hospitality. We both enjoy this part of our lives, so native to our feelings and traditions, so long deferred for me. . . . That particular summer seemed crowded with representatives of all the arts in America, with the chiefs of our contemporary literature. . . . I watched them rather closely; I watched them more detachedly than I had ever done before; I came to some curious conclusions. . . .

Dreiser had grown greyer. He was erect as ever; he gave as much as ever the impression of something colossal —a creature not quite detached from chaos and the dust, but titanic and profoundly admirable. His conversation had not changed; he protested in the same well-remembered phrases against the stupidity of things and the swinishness of mankind. Yet he seemed now at the very height and peak of his fame a little bitterer and with a wearier bitterness than in older days; his mouth seemed more than ever like an ill-healed wound. He dropped more frequently into dissatisfied silences. Not only in a little crowd which, to avoid the charge of arrogance, we had invited in to meet him one evening (such is the "quarter") but with us alone. *The American Tragedy* was sweeping the country and, in a sense, the world. He may have known, as I thought I knew, that it was not his best book. It was nevertheless a massive and memorable achievement, the natural and proper

work of these later years. A harsh inner weariness, a dark blunt quiet wretchedness seemed to possess him. . . .

Next came "Red" Lewis in the grip of private difficulties with which I had a complete and intimate sympathy. And these, I hope, have since been resolved by his union with an exceptionally brilliant and charming woman. But that was not all; that hardly touched his situation or his mood. He was in flight from himself; he tried to compensate by his immense vaudevillian talent. Why? He had written *Babbitt* and *Arrowsmith* and I agreed with him with all my heart that the sharp youngsters who sniffed at him as a mere super-journalist succeeded in making asses only of themselves. He seemed to have no inner certainty, no balance, no serenity, nothing between heaven and earth to which he could withdraw for quietude or healing. He did and said things that, as I well knew, outraged his true self. . . . I record it as significant of America in this age that Sinclair Lewis at the height of his power, wealthy, world-famous and still young depressed us by his clamorous but unmistakable unhappiness. . . .

Sherwood Anderson is a quieter and gentler spirit. There are moments when he seems to gaze almost placidly out of his velvety brown eyes. But though he remains superficially unruffled the impression of serenity does not last. Suddenly he will make an astonishingly cynical remark that seems to come up from a great depth—the sort of quiet cynical remark that points to an ultimate inner desperateness. . . .

I shall not mention by name my closer personal friends who came that summer and the next and the next, whom

we were very happy to see but in whom, with definite exceptions, there was to be observed more or less of that same wild restlessness or quiet desperateness, that failure, often in the very maturity and noonday of their powers to find the way to any balance between the soul and the world, to any serenity or peace, to any abiding city of rational and final purpose. . . . Is it America? Is it New York? Is it—stale and meaningless phrase—the transition of moral modes and modes of life and feeling? Is anyone free from that restless and wretched temper? Yes, the Jews of our national re-birth, our returned and dedicated ones. And you, and you? my friends will ask. Dare you reveal our pain and our confusion and keep silence concerning yourself? I cannot. I must not. Very well, then: I am not wholly at peace. Not yet. But the element of peacelessness comes not from within, not from any circumstance of my own life, not from my relation to purpose, love, thought, aspiration. It comes from without, from my involvement with America. It comes from the fact, to be mentioned here for the last time, that the official forces of my country, leaguing themselves with a foe, pursue me with annoyance, exclusion, chicanery and will not let me build to its completion the temple of my life. And this rankling element of injustice, injustice to which no Jew is ever reconciled, produces a tremor in my work, a residual fear of a world in which such things are possible, a darkness from time to time in the serenity which I have won. But I have won it. I am united to the life of mankind and of the universe by perceptions, by thoughts, by memories, by hopes which are at once very old and very new; I am at one with

the history, the ethos, the purpose of my people and, since I conceive this ethos as having a saving power and value for all mankind I am saved from any provincialism by my identification with Israel. . . . But the time for those final thoughts has not yet come. What I wanted here to record was my perception of the apparent restless misery of my generation of creative American minds. And I couple with this perception the life of New York as I now see it in perspective and detachedly. It seems, since my time, to have increased enormously its hectic speed, its wild quest of money and sensation, its loosening of all inner bonds. Let me emphasize the word "inner": the breaking of outer bonds or conventions by any but a disciplined and self-guided spirit has neither value nor significance. The life of my group in America, to take the thing on its own ground, seems to resemble less a Nietzschean revolution than a *cœna Trimalchionis*. But they who lie at that feast are finely attuned souls. No wonder they are harsh and jangled. . . . I may be wrong; I may be bringing to my vision of New York the rather ascetic character of my own tastes. I do not, at all events, find that terrible American restlessness and essential aimlessness, that wounded aimlessness in either Mann or Wassermann, in Franz Werfel or Ernst Toller. These men are artists, too. But they are artists not for the sake of art, but for the sake of man and—yes—and God. . . .

VIII

Delightful as the early summer with its American visitors in Paris is, it is hardly a good preparation for work. Hence,

when we had seen the friends to whom we felt closest we went for a rest to the South. Beyond the old town of Menton on the bay of Garavan we found an exquisite and tranquil spot to which we have since returned. But we found a greater experience in the ancient hill-villages of the Maritime Alps and drove through the lemon and olive groves up beautful, tortuous paths that often reminded us of the hill-roads of Upper Galilee to Roquebrune and Gorbio and Castelar. Like dark ruined nests of huge primordial birds the ancient Italian villages cling to their cliffs, sombre, withdrawn. Despite the electric wiring the people in those shadowed alleys which they reach by mule-paths cut into the rock of the hills, still speak Mentonais—a sonorous Romance dialect. These villages are fairly well known. Few people, on the other hand, climb the back-breaking mule-path, as we did, beyond the carriage road to the gaunt ruin of a tower built by the Saracens a little above the village of Ste. Agnès on the ledge of its sheer, unimaginable cliff, from which the Maritime Alps and the golden Mediterranean coast and the sea itself lie like a gigantic map before one. We clambered through the village to the extreme point of the cliff to be received, amusingly enough, by two bearded, elderly Luxembourgeois innkeepers who gave us lemonade and chatted in the comfortable German of their little native land. . . . Our talkative intelligent Mentonais coachman persuaded us next to let him drive us to the rarely visited village of Peille. Up endless, gradual slopes the road went; the groves disappeared behind us; tufts of fresh and fragrant lavender became the only vege-

tation. The great hills roll, curve after austere and gigantic curve, higher and higher and at each turning, farther but no less radiant, shines the sea. How useless and strawy the information, precisely true for all that, that these conformations are the result of blind geologic upheavals. The mountains are sublime; nor do I believe that this sublimity dwells in the mind alone. Object and subject meet, even as in art, even as in life. . . . We reached Peille hanging on a narrow ledge under a topmost peak. The houses, as in the other hill-villages, form a solid mass; wall grows into wall. No doubt that in turbulent ages men withdrew to these heights for security. But the indomitable villagers cling to their almost inaccessible homes, isolated from the world, trudging for many hours the long hard mountain paths for anything they need beyond the most primitive necessities. They are shy but cheerful and friendly. On a tiny *place* at the cliff's rim the innkeeper's wife spread for us on a wooden table well-baked bread, smooth cheese, the wonderful honey of the bees which feed upon the lavender of the mountains. . . . Returning home by way of Nice we were persuaded to visit a very different kind of mountain village, the village of Beuil. It lies half a day's motor-drive behind Nice. The astonishing road winds up through red, fantastic gorges. Again and again one's heart almost stops; the car hangs apparently in midair over dizzy ravines at whose far bottom foam and brawl the mountain-torrents. Then, suddenly, the red rocks grow green and the hills smooth-curved and cow-bells sound on upland meadows that run toward the sky. Wooden houses appear, like the chalets of Haute Savoie or Switzerland; the air is the in-

comparably tonic air of the high Alps. Beuil lies nearly five thousand feet above sea-level. One almost expects to hear the *ranz des vaches* and thinks of Tell. . . . It is incredible that the people of the inn speak French with a Southern accent. . . . But in this contrast lies the adventure. Beuil is clear, austere, starry, Northern. Before sundown you are back in Nice, gaudy, brilliant, hot beside the Midland sea. . . .

And all the while, amid these beautiful and varied and refreshing scenes I saw deep, deep within me the old synagogue at Vilna and saw again the square Hebrew letters writted by devoted scribes upon the parchments in the synagogal library and saw my Reb Mendel with his troubled eyes and saw his wife Braine, wiping her eyes with a corner of her apron, and saw the children of these two and their progeny. I did not know yet what these people would do or what their posterity would do in the lands to which they were going, nor how the story, which was afterward to be *The Island Within,* would develop. But the entire feeling of the fable came to me in gestures that I saw in my mind's eye, in silent words that never took on tone, in the atmosphere of seen and unseen places. . . . The world about us with all its persuasiveness and splendour is but as the decoration and setting of a play. For years and years we may believe that we are actors in the play and that the play is ours. But the day comes when we descend within ourselves and know that blood and instinct and tradition, rightly conceived, are more ourselves than all this brave, gay colourful world with its scenes and gestures. These never assume an ultimate gravity to us. The real, the seri-

ous, the eternal business is otherwise and otherwhere. And if we cannot dwell upon its scene, we build that scene within our hearts; and if indeed it has no earthly habitation of its own we give it one in hope, in memory, in aspiration. And that scene and dwelling place not made with hands is our true home, and Alp and Apennine and castle and cathedral and cities of the hills and of the plains are but as lovely pictures upon a curtain shaken by the random winds. . . .

Chapter Six: African Interlude

I

IT WAS the second winter in Paris, mild and grey. On wet evenings the electric lamps were reflected in the asphalt of the Place de la Concorde as in a waveless lake. If the shy sun shone I could see from my study over the low roofs of the city the Panthéon, the Dôme des Invalides, the twin towers of the Trocadéro on the extreme left, and on the extreme right the white glint of the cupola of the Sacré Cœur. The city seems to swathe one in its constant, unemphatic beauty. There is an ease about its life to which I have never yielded. But now and then the existence of that ease becomes as a thorn to me. . . . A slight feverishness, a desire for wandering came over us both. What came to us in waking dreams in this city of grey silk was the East; memories suddenly became magical: the wild swirl of an Arab crowd in Alexandria, caravans travelling by night past an arched window in Nazareth, the faint outline of Tabor under a new moon. . . . For several reasons we could not go to Palestine. We were rather poor that winter too. We were about to be sensible and settle down when there came, first, a small windfall of money and next a friend's introduction to the late president of the French Line which, luckily, has a Mediterranean service too. This gentleman made a most generous gesture. Our fares were cut in half. We could go to Tunisia. . . On a map I had seen the name of the city of Sfax. . . . I

wanted to see if there really was such a city outside of the tales of Dunsany. . . . We began in anticipation to sniff the East. For the East, if you are so minded, is the great adventure. Europe, as a visible thing, is one. The essentials of its history, as expressed in church and palace and prison, in paint and marble, are identical. The layers of civilization are identical: Gothic, Renaissance, baroque, rococo; Chartres, Cologne, Westminster; palaces south, north, west; the fountain of Trevi and the Hofburg Portals; Versailles and Schönbrunn and Sans Souci. In literature the nations are highly individualized; there first different folk and then characteristic individuals express themselves. But Christian, chivalric, Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe is ethically and visibly one to an extent that, since neither my ethnic nor spiritual roots are in its soil, cloys me at length. Carcassonne or Rothenburg, a wayside shrine on the road to Tivoli or on the road to Innsbruck, mediaeval houses with wooden beams and projecting second stories in Tours or Lübeck. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. A palace in a crooked street of Avignon, the palace of Wallenstein in Prague. I understand the differences due to folk and climate. Beneath them is the massive sameness of a unified warlike, aristocratic Christian civilization. . . . The East is the only adventure left. It refreshes and purges the eye; it leads to new reflections and observations; it has sharp lights and shadows for the vision of both the body and the mind.

The ports of Europe that lead to the East are touched by the magic of that adventurous difference: Venice, Marseilles, even Trieste. Along the water-side of Marseilles dark faces

and brilliant cloaks and turbans begin to appear. Behind those eyes of black or dark bronze are other thoughts and other memories than ours. Not better or worse. Judgments of value are out of place here. But I cannot at once estimate, place, classify each human creature, as one can so easily do in Western Europe and America; I do not see through each face a definite vista of history, experience and probable character. Recognition is replaced by inquiry and by studious wonder. The mind is stimulated and enlarged and the eye drinks in thirstily new colours and unfamiliar forms.

On the quite comfortable boat of the French Line Europe shut us tightly in again. There were middle-class French people who were going to North Africa because they had business to attend to in Tunis. They drank their apéritifs and liqueurs and it was quite clear that they were going from one French town to another and regarded what they call *la vie indigène* as a necessary nuisance. They were inwardly and in their attitude quite like the well-bred red-faced Englishman who builds around him in Shanghai or Singapore a tight little English life with high tea and dinner-jacket and thinks it rather decent of him to put up with the natives as pleasantly as he does. . . . There were tourists of various nationalities, attracted by the motor circuits of the Compagnie Transatlantique and these were going as to a spectacle which was to be for them less than a play, for it would not touch their emotions; they were going for mere picturesqueness and for scraps of uncommon information and not the least of their motives was to gain a sense of ease and power and superiority from the consciousness of

having travelled in exotic places. There was a very tall, slender Dutch gentleman of sixty with long white teeth and a beautiful white beard coquettishly parted and brushed toward either side and remarkably well-preserved skin, and an equally tall, cool, excessively virginal daughter. He was proud of his French and talked to everyone quite unmotivatedly. He soaked in information condescendingly; I could see him on his return home magnificently authoritative concerning the amusing and not wholly negligible African continent. . . . The eyes of a large, square, dark man sought mine several times in understanding in the smoking-room. He succeeded in telling me that he was a purchasing agent for one of the farthest republics of the Soviet Union. But since I could speak neither Arabic nor Russian nor Turkish and since his combined French and German vocabulary consisted of an hundred words our communication was fragmentary. He looked at the other passengers and then smiled at me with a moan of pain at his inability to share with me his vision of their world and of his own. . . .

We watched the tan and mauve and purple rocks of the great Mediterranean islands stand out in the translucent air. But we were glad, being both but mediocre sailors, when the low shore of Africa came in sight and we could go on land for an hour at Bizerta. European houses and steam-cranes are in the foreground. But we made our way past these to the edge of Arab streets with windowless houses and saw a tall Moslem tethering an ass to a stake. A slight veil of cloud was stretched over the sky and the African sun was hidden. The flat shore and the weedy estuaries might have been almost anywhere in the world.

It was the Moslem who changed earth and sky. Not his dirty burnous in which he was tightly wrapt against a cool wind, but the grave quietude of his face. The mobility, the eagerness, the striving and crying of the West were suddenly wiped out. The man looked at us with incurious eyes. We were to him one with the steam-crane and the barracks and the telegraph office and the European ship. He went about his business as his kind have done since, perhaps a thousand years ago, the early fervour of the prophet's teaching died away.

II

It is by way of a long canal dug into mud-flats that the ship reaches Tunis. Neither this approach nor the sordid landing-place, where a few wretched beggars display their abominable deformities, gives any promise of the white radiance of the city nor of its incomparable situation. Tired and with a slightly dulled feeling we drove through fairly conventional French avenues to our hotel. But we were restless; we wanted to press the East close to us; we took a carriage and drove to the old Jewish graveyard which must once, long ago, have been beyond the city gates. It was already dusk and our Maltese coachman, whom we continued to employ, gave us the first taste of his extraordinary mixture of several Mediterranean languages in which enough French and Italian could be recognized for communication. He turned around and looked at us. Why should we go, of all places, to the Jewish graveyard? We reached it soon. Someone produced the *shamat,* a small old man with bright

eyes and a tight, very white beard, wearing on his head the red sheshiah of all good Tunisians. Within the walls of the grey burying-ground the flat head-stones stood erect, though some were deep-sunken in the earth, with a stern and solitary air. The *shamat* hastened ahead of us at an eager, running obsequious pace. Here were the grave-stones of the learned, of rabbis and teachers. He read the names to us and phrases concerning holiness and Talmudic wisdom. Thus we communicated, for he spoke no French; but by means of a Hebrew phrase or two we established a closer understanding and he suddenly bobbed toward me and kissed my shoulder. He took the money I gave him deprecatorily. He was glad of the visit. He was lonely in his graveyard. Doubtless most Jewish tourists are like those friends of mine who wanted in Palestine to study Arab dances. . . .

The morning was brilliant, although the mistral blew. We took our coachman and drove straight into the thousand and one nights. They were all here, those grave and enigmatic faces, though most of the men wore the sheshiah instead of the turban. Only the sprightly and eloquent ladies were not here. The Tunisians are fiercely orthodox. The women are completely swathed and wear a black cloth mask with eye-slits. Only an occasional ankle and French shoes betray age and station. Beggars came, for we drove slowly, old men with gentle faces, wrapped in fold after fold of ragged cloth. We reached the Place de la Kasba with its French administrative buildings and the huge citadel and a minaret in the background. There stood Ahmed Kaiba, a tall young man in an elegant brown bur-

nous. He had an oval face the colour of a very light cigar and sad black eyes and he assured us in pidgin French that we needed a guide. A gesture of doubt on our part. He was in the carriage opposite us. We kept him all during our stay in the city. He was a liar and indifferently honest. He pouted when we made any purchase directly. When I kept him down to his fee and a decent tip, he gave a perceptible shrug of his shoulders. But he always came back. He kept murmuring, as we insisted on going where we liked, and drove our own bargains with Jewish merchants: "Ils n'sont pas d'braves gens—les Juifs—ils n'sont pas, non!" I told him that we were Jews too. He remained sceptical. Mad, doubtless, but not that. He despised Jews too profoundly. . . He pretended not to know where the mosquées Israélites, as all guides insist on calling synagogues, were situated. He exchanged mildly jeering remarks in Arabic with passers-by in the bazaars when we talked to Jewish silversmiths or workers in brass and copper. Despite his race he was the finished, instinctive anti-Semite. From him, though of course not from him alone, there came a strong and tragic sense of the oppression of our people, herded in their *mellahs* or quarters until the French occupation. . . . Nor are they all French citizens yet. . . .

The *souks* of Tunis, which we now set about to explore, are unrivalled except by the bazaars of Cairo. In the heart of the Medina, or city of the Arabs, winds madly in and out this labyrinth of cobbled alleys lined on either side by door-and-windowless shops, half-roofed here and there and so dappled with the sharp shadows and dazzling molten light of the East. The crowd is dignified but has no sense

of order. The robed men and swathed women, the cake-sellers with their wooden platters on their heads, Negroes driving donkeys, all seem by preference to keep a zigzag course. Cross-legged the shopkeepers on either side sit amid their wares. Each alley has its special character. There is the street of the silversmiths, of the leather workers, of the workers in brass and copper who sit beside their little anvils hammering or engrave and inlay the metal before one's eyes. There are the weaver's alleys with bobbin-children sitting under the hand looms and the weavers working from early until late turning out the brilliantly striped silks of the country. A perfect mediaeval scene. A world before the machine and the industrial revolution. . . . Ahmed tried to drag us to sly English-speaking Arabs who serve coffee and sell wares often made in Birmingham and Lyons and Frankfurt. . . . We began to recognize the Jews both by their physiognomies and because often they wear European hats. Most of them spoke quite good French and seemed much touched by tourists who were frankly brethren. They directed us trustworthily, one silversmith brought out for Thelma a very wonderful silver chain of ancient workmanship, such as is never seen any more in the open *souks,* and hung it around her neck and asked a touchingly modest price; another took out of his safe an ancient silver *mezuzah* and sold it to me, as to one who would love it, for the equivalent of a few dollars; a third sold us most reasonably a few bits of silver-encrusted brass and sent messengers to help us comply with the regulations of the government for taking goods back to Europe. Ahmed moped and repeated his formula and exchanged

remarks with passing Arabs. But our small escapes from him seemed to sting him to activity. He turned up his quite straight nose, slipped his hands into the huge sleeves of his burnous and announced that he would show us the life of his people.

III

An exquisite brightness surrounds the Cadi's court. The offices are grouped about a colonnaded hall of white and black marble open to the deep blue of the sky. There is no hint of the sordid pain that hovers over Western courts. Here, of course, only religious and domestic cases are tried. But it is precisely the latter which in our civilization so vibrate with fear and rancour. Here is a frank acceptance of some, at least, of the realities of life. The women are veiled and secluded and all rich men have several wives. But the relation of a man to each wife is well-ordered; each must receive her due, else she appears here. The husband cannot absent himself from her bed or stint her of her share of his society or goods. For both economic and cultural reasons polygamy is justly doomed as an institution. I learned at the Cadi's court that within it good sense and humanity need not be abandoned. . . . A foolishly grinning Negro lolled about. All his four wives had appeared to divorce him. He had married them to support him. The secretary of the court assured me that the women would be liberated at once. . . . A sullen Arab was accused by two of his wives of cruelty. This man, too, I was assured, would be condemned by the court. . . . That court itself is

a simple but clean and bright room. The Cadi sits on a divan. Defendant and plaintiff and the advocates of both face him in attitudes in which familiarity mingles with respect. A good deal of talk and protestation and eloquence is permitted. It is as though people were taking counsel together and freeing their minds before a grave, religious arbiter. . . . There is not, as in Christendom, a profound division between human instincts and the facts of life on the one hand and the assumptions of the law on the other. Hence discussion is possible and it is equally possible that the Cadi's decision, though based upon Koranic law, may sustain a real relation to the facts of the case. . . . In a chamber beyond the room of judgment sit the secretaries who keep the records of the court in heavy folios in which, with the rare smile of the Arab, they show the many pages of intricate and decorative calligraphy.

It is, of course, in all its outer aspects, a man's civilization, this civilization of the Moslems, and thus reaches enormously far back into the layers of history. It misses the adventures of the hearts, the infinite variety of human contacts and relationships; it misses both the poetic and the psychological interests of life. Night comes and the men sit rather dully in their cafés and listen to the endless and recurrent modulations of their melancholy music. They are very sober; they eat a few sweet seeds and drink coffee or tea. The faces are lifeless under the sheshiahs or burnous hoods; they glance at a Western woman with weary contempt, without avidity. . . . They are hardly more demonstrative at their theatre, a great, cold, barnlike hall in which actors clad as in the great days of the Caliphate of Bagdad

go with stiff conventional gestures through the mummery of a play cut by some French-reading Arab of Egypt after the pattern of Corneille. . . . Excitement they draw from religion or else, now and then, from that blackest of Islamic sins, indulgence in alcohol which they find in the houses of prostitutes on the Rue des Artistes. . . . To this man's civilization belongs war. And that being blessedly prevented for the most part by the French occupation the Arabs stagnate. Piracy or internal strife followed their ancient wars of conquest. They have kept the exact shell of the mediaeval civilization that crystallized about violence. Now they are inexpressive. Even their arts of architecture and decoration are weary repetitions of immemorial forms. Their life retains at its simplest an extraordinary grace. Again and again, leaving the thronged Medina, the city called by that name in both Arabic and Hebrew, we wandered through the native quarters of white walls broken shyly here and there by discreet windows behind intricate green grill work, seeing beyond hushed walls the tops of palms and fig trees in secret gardens. The houses slant down in the poorer streets, but are equally white and grave. . . . The street life is never turbulent or hurried even in the thronged suburb of Bab Souïka, not even on the Place Halfauine. Arab and Negro cafés line the square. There is one even under the beautiful mosque to the left. White and brown burnouses, the white swathing of the black-veiled women, turbans, hoods, sheshiahs, bronze and black faces, nothing stirs agitatedly, hurries, is eager with the eagerness of the West. The men in the cafés are calm; the bread-seller behind his huge flat table full of loaves

stands quietly in front of a lovely Moorish window. . . . Now and then for a moment there will be a shrill noise of chaffering. Then all again is grave and seemly. . . . This stagnant civilization has an inner wisdom of some kind, not a very high wisdom; except for the French occupation there would be dirt, disease and cruelty; but a wisdom that is by contrast healing and grateful to Western nerves. . . .

We dropped Ahmed for a period. He pouted. But like most guides he was densely ignorant and an incessant babbler. We frequented the Parc du Belvedere which the French have laid out on a hill, and from the reconstructed *Koubba* with its entrancing carved plaster work sheathing stained glass we viewed the majestic scene. To the south lies Tunis with the shadows of the black African mountains far behind; to the east the lake of Tunis, the hills on which Carthage was once built and the Midland Sea; far to the west begin the arches of that intrepid aqueduct which the Romans sent from here to the edge of the Libyan desert. . . . We drove out to the heights overlooking the gulf on which Carthage once stood—that new city of the Phoenicians, a Semitic folk, which so long disputed the empire of the Mediterranean with Rome and was crushed. Utterly crushed. A few steles and inscriptions and statuettes are shown in a small museum by a learned *père blanc*. But the few actual ruins on that imperial site are Roman and the topmost hill bears the Cathedral of St. Louis. The folk of Dido are less than a legend. One begins here to feel that gradual resentment of Rome which gathers force on a journey South, which one has nursed perhaps unconsciously in the cities of Europe. Ruthlessly, impiously Rome

stamped out everywhere the life it found and built its practical aqueducts, its arrogant baths, its brutal arenas. Its temples are few and conventional and cold. The ruins of Rome have neither mystery nor pathos; the inscriptions upon them speak the stripped language of pride and power. This people whose portentous stone and marble is found from the Rhine to the great desert and from Western Spain to the banks of the Jordan possessed the world because it was impenetrably worldly and possessed nothing else. It had no strong interior life; it had no vision of lasting values. It measured eternity even through the mouth of its highest poets by the continuance of a city, an empty ceremony, a conventional cult. It built camps in Britain and amphitheatres for combats between men and beasts of which the ruins, as at Djem, still tower to astonish one amid the desert lands of Africa. Its legions and its slaves covered the earth and it stamped the terror of its naked force upon the heart of mankind. But it is time for the legend of its greatness to be broken. Rome did her utmost to crush the greatness that she saw, reducing the Greek to a slave and the Jew to an outcast and a wanderer, never dreaming that the spirits of the conquered and dispersed can triumph over the fasces of dead legions, the ruins of a circus, the crumbling columns of an empty shrine. . . . Later we saw other memorials of Carthage in the museum of the Bey's great palace at Bardo. But here upon the site of the city the remnants are pitiful. We left them not unwillingly for the exquisite little Arab city nearby of Sidi bou Sai, a city built upon the slope of a hill with white arches and mina-

rets and still, mysterious streets—a perfect Moorish city dreamlike beside the sea. . . .

Returning to Tunis we had the good fortune, through the services of M. Del Paz, to get in touch with Maître Cohen-Hadria, a distinguished member of the French bar and a devoted Jew. On Friday evening and Saturday morning he took us through the temples of the city. . . . There was thus revealed to us an immemorial life. Doubtless M. Cohen-Hadria asserted more than can be proved when he expressed his belief that Jewish settlements were made here upon the return of the exiles from Babylon. What is quite certain is that Jewish life and learning here antedate both Christianity and Islam. It may be that Jews came hither under the rule of the Carthaginians; it is certain that they dwelt here under Rome. Of all that remote past only faint memories and dubious records are left. The more than millennial Mohammedan domination has stamped itself indelibly upon our people here. Nor must it be forgotten that possibly some of the Jews here are descendants of migratory portions of those Arabized Jewish tribes who resisted Islam at its birth and whom the prophet and his companions besieged in their fortified camps and drove from Yemen, the *Arabia felix* of the ancients, toward the deserts of the north. . . . One or two of the synagogues that we visited are separate buildings of no great age. The majority are small houses or rooms of prayer hidden at the end of blind alleys, suddenly found in the depth of mysterious courtyards in the labyrinth of the Mohammedan city. They are the places of worship of an endangered and despised folk. You enter them and the men at prayer are,

except upon the closest inspection, in no wise distinguishable from the Moslems who throng the streets without. They wear the garments of the land. Except for a few in European clothes in the larger and newer synagogue, they are wrapt in burnouses and their heads are covered by turbans or sheshiahs, by fezzes or hoods. That old gaunt tattered beggar over there so devoutly at prayer with his face toward Jerusalem, had one met him in the *souks,* one would have taken him unhesitatingly for an Arab. His very physiognomy is that of the Ishmaelite; his skin is dark; he is tall and lithe like the followers of the Prophet. Only his nose is a shadow more aquiline, only in his eyes is there an indefinable expression of visionary melancholy. . . . The Romans oppressed his ancestors coldly and contemptuously, the Christians with a passionate vindictiveness, Islam granted them a formal toleration punctuated by sudden fury and always accompanied by the imposition of humiliating distinctions and signs. So, after more than a thousand years of Mohammedanism, this old Jew, except to the most discerning eye, looks like a Mohammedan, is clothed in the fashion of the land and speaks not Hebrew but a strongly Hebraized Arabic. But it is *Erev Shabbat;* he prays and his face is turned toward Jerusalem. He will not eat or drink with the Ishmaelite nor intermarry with him, though folk and speech are so closely allied. And now, under the apparently very sensible and efficient protectorate of France, the Ishmaelite is sullen and stagnant. He hates the Jew more than ever, because the children of the Jew, strong Zionists or, at least, like M. Cohen-Hadria beside us, passionately devoted to their people, doff without difficulty the

worn garments of Arabic civilization and put on the new garments of France and of the West. And remain Jews. And absorb the civilization of Europe as they had adopted that of Africa. And remain Jews. . . . Standing in that Tunisian synagogue between the gaunt old beggar and the charming and cultured Europeanized Jew beside me, both having sprung from the same stock in the same ancient city, I saw once more the central truth of our history: environment is nothing, blood and instinct are all. To us. To us. Generalization is dangerous here. But our story does not change. The flight from the *mellahs* of North Africa is beginning. Doubtless there will be, though not as definitely as in pre-Zionist days, a generation of French assimilationists. But the children or, at farthest, the grandchildren of that generation will remember, will return, will be found with their faces set toward Jerusalem. . . .

IV

But we had come to seek the strange city of Sfax and to get a glimpse at least of the edge of the great desert, which is the father of all deserts, of the Arabian desert, of the desert of Sinai, of the desert from which rises Hebron the city of the young David. We wanted to see again *sheikhs* with their families and flocks faring from pasturage to pasturage in the manner of our father Abraham. . . . Luckily for our plans I had discovered that the all-powerful concierge of our hotel was a German Swiss. He was so happy to chat in his mother-tongue that he rented us a good motor-car driven by a very agreeable and intelligent French chauffeur

at less than half the normal price and announced that now we would be able to see the country in peace. The trains, he said, were no place for *Herrschaften* like us anyhow. They were full of Arabs and Jews. "But, look here," I said, "we are Jews." He looked at me with kindly reproof. It hurt him that I didn't think him capable of making a gentleman's distinctions. "Das, mein Herr," he said, "ist doch etwas ganz anderes!" . . .

In the freshness of the early morning we spun out of Tunis toward the south. Hills rise from the centre of an arid plane—hills black and menacing and naked that seem suddenly to speak of Africa, not of this strip of northern coast to which have clung the civilizations of the North and the East, but of that unimaginably vast continent that stretches southward toward the antarctic seas. The hills speak of dark jungles and of savage rites and make you forget for the hour that the Islamic civilization of the coast, which I have justly enough called static, has in it still some active principle of religious fervour and is rapidly spreading the faith of the Prophet to the equator and beyond. Where Christian missionaries labour and die in vain, the emissaries of Mecca and Kairuan convert the black people of Africa by the tens of thousands. The oppressed man goes to the oppressed, the dark man to his darker brother. Behind the ignorant, half-savage missionary of Islam there do not stand the guns and exploitations, the liquor and the lashings of the West. He had no share in the Congo horrors of the Belgian régime; he does not come for rubber and has no responsibility for the infamy of forced labour which is depopulating Central Africa. The proclaimer of

Christ, an infinitely more civilized person in himself, brings with him the reek of superiority and of force. He smells, despite himself, of the gun, the whip, the chained labourer in the rubber forest; he preaches peace and has been again and again at war there, in Africa, with white fellow Christians. His efforts are sterile. The religion of Christ, since it has not repudiated the so-called civilization of Christendom, is doomed. . . .

The black African mountains fade behind. We are still a good two hundred miles from *El Erg*, the region of the great sand-dunes, the true Saharan desert. We shall, in fact, never quite reach it. But this arid plain already shows the sand-waves of desert lands, the tufts of harsh grasses; already the wind blows in the steady, direct way of a desert wind and the burnouses of wayfarers on asses or camels stream like flags. . . . The movement of caravans begins. It is foaling time and behind the mares trot the long-legged, fragile-looking foals. Is it a fantastic impression that the camel has a curiously Semitic profile? Of course it is. But it amuses us by its unmistakable recurrence. . . . Once more the wayfaring life of the East. I could watch it forever. For it seems to rebuke our mad haste, our hectic movement over the surface of the earth. Has it brought peace, this drawing together of the ends of the world by speed? Has it made for brotherhood among men that every shopkeeper in the remotest cities of half-forgotten lands babbles a little English? Friends come and advise me to abandon the slow and dirty train and fly. To see even less than I do? To have fewer contacts with men than my present sufficiently pitiful ones? If we were not whirring

by in a car, perhaps some leader of a caravan would let us speak with him and make friends and perhaps at night, under the shadow of his tent, over the rice and mutton, we could learn much that it behooves us to know. . . . No, our mechanical civilization has not bettered human life by its increasing power over instruments of speed and force. These lead ultimately to ignorance and war. The triumphs of modern Western civilization lie in other directions and these are well illustrated by the French régime in North Africa. The land is clean and salubrious; there is no foul smell in the narrowest *souk;* the Bedouin settlements in remote oases have sufficient drainage; wherever you go there is a French hotel with light, modern plumbing, fresh and palatable food.

We took luncheon at an inn by the wayside; we caught a far glimpse of the city of Sousse; toward the middle of the afternoon there rose from the desert plain the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre of El Djem. Arab children clambered over shattered Corinthian columns and capitals and camels and asses were tethered where once had sat the swanky Romans of the *colonia* of Thysdrus, a very rich city, to witness cruel and stupid sports in an arena that vied in size and splendour with the Colosseum itself. The westering sun shone through the decaying arches. We did not linger long; we wanted to reach the city we were seeking before dusk. The light was mellow but still strong when we passed the great olive groves which girdle the city of Sfax.

It is a city beautiful to the eye that rises from the sandy plain. The white crenellated walls flanked by square towers

are quite intact. But the French streets and gardens outside of the walls are proof of peace. The arched gates of the city are permanently open and through them one beholds the placid many-coloured native life. . . . We went into the city by dusk and by daylight; we wandered through the street of the smiths, and through the streets of the dyers and the leather workers and the workers in silver, and saw the great mosque and the monastery of Sidi Abd el Kader and white minarets with little galleries of painted wood. Under lovely façades and Moorish gateways bob the green turbans of the members of the sect of Ali, who hold themselves to be the direct descendants of the Prophet. How still and grave and graceful are these untouched Arabic cities in spite of the robed crowds that throng the narrow streets. And to the European or American they have one special note, one special virtue: the absence of provincial dulness. In Tours as well as in Youngstown you feel not only that the town is dull but that the inhabitants know and believe it to be dull. They all yearn more or less for what they conceive to be the hectic excitement of the great cities. They are in flight from what they have and are and try to mimic the noise, the garishness, the pleasures and qualities which they seem to lack. Sfax is calm and content. More illiterate, harsher, from our point of view, these Moslems have a secret that we have lost, if ever we possessed it—the secret of accepting a typical human fate within their civilization with dignity and with content. They are more mature than the people of the West. For Youngstown will shy at a new idea almost as strongly as Sfax; but it is terribly eager for new devices. These Sfax

regards with contempt. It knows where the ground-work and foundation of human life really is. . . . Relative observations, of course, and relative truths. But important to us who lose more and more the power of satisfaction in the unchanging elements of human life and, like sick or unruly children, crave a succession of toys that leave us empty-handed, empty-hearted in the end. . . .

V

Beyond Sfax to the south stretches the desert. Marvellous oases suddenly appear beside the rare springs. To one such, the oasis of Gabes, we were bound. But the desert is here —the endless stretch of camel-coloured sand. Black primitive tents appear beside the road. White-swathed Bedouins with stern dark faces pass you with their black-robed, unveiled women who rattle as they walk with the clink of their massive silver chains and heavy anklets. Camels abound and hardy sheep and asses. As these Semitic tribes came aforetime out of the Arabian desert, so they have remained. All save one tribe—the children of Abraham *el ibri,* the man from beyond the river and the *Bne Israel* who sprang from the son of his son. . . . On and on the desert extends, even for our flying motor-car. How much more the slow travellers on camels who are going not only to Gabes but far beyond into *El Erg* where the sand-storms blow and the oases are far and meagre. Here too a wind is blowing and the sand is waved like the shore-waters of the sea and it sifts into one's garments and mouth and ears, and one begins to understand the white swathing of the

Bedouins. . . . But we leave the camels with their foals and the graceful riders behind us and come upon the first sight of the oasis, a *koubba,* a shrine or saint's tomb, throwing its sharp black shadow upon the tawny sand. Doubtless, as the historians of art assert, Moorish architecture derives more or less directly from the Byzantine. But in the simple *koubba* the Arabs have, largely by elimination, developed a form that expresses both the life of the desert and certain traits of the Semitic mind. A white cube crowned by a white semi-sphere—that is the *koubba* at its simplest. The pure geometrical form is not broken, of course, where the cube bears a square or hexagonal base for the half-sphere to rest on. These small severe utterly unadorned structures are, by virtue of sheer form and proportion, of a great, I had almost said, a sublime beauty. Elaborate mosques leave me almost as cold as elaborate churches, though they offend me less by the absence of anthropomorphic images. But the plain *koubba,* symbol of Unity, alone in the desert as a man's soul is alone in the universe, is a place beside which one might invoke the inscrutable. . . . Not far behind the *koubba* the first palms of the oasis lifted their heads, and soon we drove into an avenue and heard the sound of the running of water and felt a cooler wind upon our faces. . . .

The oasis of Gabes lies beside the sea and has one of the most magnificent beaches in the world. But though one may wander with delight upon this huge stretch of golden sand dotted by thousands of beautiful and curious shells, one always returns, as to a rarer and more magical place, to the date-gardens of the oasis. A powerful stream waters

these great gardens in which grow several hundred thousand date-palms; there are green spots beside the stream far from the Bedouin town or the French settlement where one may lie on the grass and watch the waving of the palms and have a vision behind them of the endless desert stretching toward the dark heart of Africa. And in this contrast between cool and shade and fruitfulness and the hot, dry desert there is a singular charm and peace, a magic not to be felt in richer and less perilous lands. . . .

Lower down the *oued,* or water, the Bedouin women, black-robed from head to foot but unveiled, wash their linen in the stream. They have well-moulded faces and graceful hands and feet. They are shy and dread the camera. Their silver anklets and bracelets glitter in the light. You turn for a moment and suddenly they have slipped back into the town, the incomparable Bedouin town of Djara.

Many of the streets of the town follow rude Roman colonnades which have the aspect of having once been cellars, but which now give shade in the African sun. In these streets the Bedouins have built their houses into the Roman masonry. The quietude all about is very great. Once a woman burst out of a small house scolding violently. But her voice soon trailed off into silence. The people are grave and tranquil. Even on the market-place about which the town clusters the slightly guttural chaffering is intermittent and unexcited. . . . We are going back to Africa some day, if only to see again the gardens of the oasis and the market-place of Djara. It is a square of moderate size surrounded by white arcades of rude masonry. But the

arches under which the merchants sit with their simple wares curve with a grace that is at once stately and soft, at once monumental and metaphysical. In the sunshine of the square, white-robed and hooded Bedouins buy and sell camels and sheep and goats and wheat and other grain which they measure in rude wooden measures from great heaps on the earth. The little crowd is mobile enough, but its gestures remain plastic. Human movement is not syncopated by eagerness or speed or nervous fears. No doubt hard bargains are driven. But the dignity of man is not sacrificed to either time or the bargain. . . . Under the arcades primitive drygoods are sold. Except for their women's silver ornaments which the desert smiths seem to make only on order, there was nothing of beauty here except a few rudely but brilliantly embroidered shawls of which Thelma bought one as a memento. The beauty is in the scene and in the aspect and the gestures of a folk that values tranquillity, that will not hasten nor break the lines of noble demeanour for little things. . . .

I looked and asked for Jews. We were directed to a synagogue and hoped at most that the *shamat* would speak a little French. But when we came to the bright little temple built into a coil of masonry but with tall windows, we heard children's voices and slipped in. The quaintest *melamed* ever seen, a narrow, agile man with spectacles far down on an inquisitive nose, was teaching a group of small boys with golden-tinged oval faces and wise sad black eyes. The boys wore little robes and caps and the teacher a black turban. Neither he nor, alas, his pupils could speak French and a Hebrew greeting was all we could exchange.

But that sunny *cheder* made us seek further and very soon we came upon another synagogue, a graceful Moorish interior, which evidently served on week-days as both the *Talmud-Torah* and the *Beth Hamidrash* of that sunny town. For within sat a very beautiful man of about forty wearing a tight but silky black beard—a black-turbaned, golden-skinned, singularly urbane figure with a Talmudic folio on his knees, and on benches against the wall cross-legged sat six or eight youths studying quarto volumes with islands of text half-lost within the squares of crowding commentary. These youths were slender and well-built and like the children of the *cheder* of a remarkable beauty. Faces both strong and sensitive and bodies straight and agile. Nor must I forget a third generation. In the outer court against an ancient wall on benches of stone sat three very old men. Their slippers lay on the earth before them; their beards of gleaming white seemed to shine under their onyx-black turbans. They were studying the Law and I took advantage of their absorption to photograph them. Magnificent persons, these Jews of the Bedouin town of Djara, unbowed by the centuries of Mohammedan misrule, pure-bred, learned and pious. They may be ignorant and narrow from a Western point of view; they have a human dignity and freedom and comeliness that you will not find common in Berlin or Paris or New York. . . .

VI

We lingered as long as we dared in the gardens of the oasis of Gabes. But both our time and our money were getting

short and I wanted on the way back to Tunis to see the city of Kairuan. For not only is this the holy city of the Mohammedans of North Africa, founded in the fiftieth year of the hegira, but it was also for a brief period of the tenth and eleventh centuries a centre of Jewish learning and authority. . . . We made excellent time and came within sight of the city in the early afternoon. We halted on an eminence and saw here as in Sfax the perfect unpierced rampart of white crenellated walls but saw, rising above these, the brilliant cupolas and minarets clustered and dreamlike of the great mosques and monasteries of the holy city. The air was of a perfect translucence; the curve of the sky behind that white city of temples was like ultramarine silk; the domes and minarets stood unimaginably dazzling against the blue. . . . The mosques are no less impressive when visited than from a distance. Of a quite special grandeur are the vast inner courts and colonnades and many naves of the mosque of Sidi Okba, the founder of the city. The carved plaster is exquisite, as it is everywhere. It is the innumerable columns that take one's breath away. For these columns and their varied capitals tell a millennial history. These marbles were gathered here through the ages for the mosque: there are Punic capitals and Roman of earlier and later periods, Byzantine capitals and early Islamic. . . . Here alone, in all Tunisia, foreigners may enter the mosques. An attendant rolls up the precious carpets and lets one walk on matting. We were just approaching the magnificent pulpit of carved wood when the attendant, catching sight of my profile in the dim light, shouted in a voice filled with horror *"Ihudi!"* Our rather stupid guide

shouted back at him. The sacrilege was committed. Anyhow, tourists are tourists. . . . Leaving the almost equally lovely and spacious inner court of the *zauïa* of Sidi Sahab I suddenly turned on the guide. I wanted to see the "mosquée Israélite." He growled a little and led us swiftly into the alleys of the city. A blank wall and a dull door and no key. We stood there helpless. Suddenly appeared from around a corner a Jewish lad of about fifteen in European clothes. He smiled and addressed us in fluent French. Yes, he would get us the key. But this, the only synagogue left in Kairuan, was small and poor; the people were leaving; the Moslems were too fanatical. Not only are the Jews not permitted in or near the mosques, which is no deprivation, but it is not safe for them, despite the French occupation, to be seen abroad on Friday or during the whole month of Ramadan. He fetched us the key through a dark neighbouring window and turned it in a rusty lock. A bare, brownish triangular room in which fifteen people might stand or sit; a single *Sefer Torah* behind a tattered curtain of silk. A poor refuge of the outcast. Not of the hopeless, for to the right of the door hung the blue collection box bearing the white Star of David of the Zionist organization. The lad saw me look at it and we exchanged glances. I offered him a fee. He would not take it and I dropped the money into the blue box. Soon there will be no Jews in Kairuan. Yet this city, as I have said, was once the light of the diaspora in the north of Africa. In its *yeshiboth* were trained rabbis and teachers for the whole of Magrehb; here Isaac Israeli cultivated not only Hebrew studies but philosophy and natural history in the tenth cen-

tury and here some years later Jacob ben Nissim addressed a series of legal and doctrinal questions to the then chief of the great Babylonian academy of Pumbadita, so searching and enlightened in character that the resultant controversy affected thought and speculation for centuries. . . . In how many cities of the East and the West have we not flourished and declined, been tolerated and even at times admired and then cast out again! The Babylonian academies were extinguished; the centre of intellectual life shifted from Kairuan to Spain to be followed by the great expulsion. A king of Poland invited us to settle in his dominions. . . . The tale goes on and on; it is like a legend of magic—a legend not of this precise prosaic, economic world. . . . One of its many symbols is Kairuan. . . .

VII

Why do I write this story of travel and observation? I doubt whether it taught me anything that I could not have learned from books or arrived at by the processes of thought. For the delight and the stir and the refreshment are private matters. But what, persuading myself by the magic of Sfax, I set out to see was the colour and gesture of a civilization wholly different from our own and the fate and character of Jewry under that civilization. I brought back to Europe no conclusions new to myself, but I brought back what the sciences have justly taught us to value, the authority and satisfaction of direct observation.

There are two Orients. There is the mystical and nihilistic Orient which has attracted so many Western minds in

recent years. It begins somewhere in Russia and stretches to the Indian Ocean. It denies personality and its values; it yearns for chaos; it calls chaos by fine names. But it denies form, value, change, hope, differentiation, freedom. Europe must stand now as ever a rampart against that blind and overwhelming tide, or we shall all be coolies. . . . (By which I do not wish to be understood as attacking Communism either as a way of life or as an economic theory.) . . . We must stand by the Greek tradition in politics and science, by the tradition of the sovereign personality and the sovereign mind. . . .

But there is another Orient. Mohammedanism is a sufficiently barbarous religion and way of life. But the Arabs are older than Islam and may survive it even as the Nordic peoples are far older than Pauline Christianity and will certainly survive it. But watch these Arabs. They do not yearn to disintegrate, to fling themselves into chaos, to melt into Nirvana. They are magnificently tenacious of human personality and its values, as they understand both, and speak to an unseen God in empty shrines. They are the fierce Protestants of the East. In the desert and alone a man speaks with God. That man is erect, himself; his highest values are personal values. Yet these men have hitherto at least avoided the over-eagerness of the West, its haste without direction, its confusion on eternal and fundamental facts and issues. They do not seek to substitute—vain task!—amusements or variety of interests, all excellent in themselves, for the only true satisfactions that do not leave such a being as man: house and garden, woman and child, dignified age and healthy posterity, a name for honour and

charity, a grave among the graves of one's ancestors. Hence the Orient of the Arabs produces an impression of virility, in the best and original sense of the word, which Europe and America are fast losing. One who seeks ultimate values will do well to flee for a space from the turmoil, the conflicts, the social (I do not mean political or economic) disintegration of Western life and watch the Arabs both of the towns and of the desert moving with dignity and distinction through lives which Methodist movie-fans on prairie villages with corner drug stores would consider unadventurous and dull. . . .

These people, to come to the second purpose of our journey, are closely akin to us Jews in race, in physiognomy, in speech. Need I recall the fact that Hebrew and Arabic are languages so closely cognate that, as in two Germanic or two Romance languages, many words are almost or wholly identical—such words as those that stand for city, gate, father, peace, spring? Yet our fate under Islam has been, upon the whole, not greatly happier than under Christianity. There have been periods of tolerance and even favour; hence a whole period of Jewish culture has been recorded in Arabic, even as other periods have left their records in the speech of other peoples not wholly inhospitable to us. But the Arab has disliked, feared, persecuted us, by and large, even as the Nordic has done. There is no moral difference between yellow splotch on gaberdine and sable turban, between ghetto and mellah. Historic explanations are not statements of cause. They are only rationalizations after the fact. It is true that the illiterate Mohammed, gathering the materials of a new religion from

Christian and Jewish legend, hoped to find the Arabized Jews of the city which he afterwards called Medina, or *the* city, his earliest and most eager adherents. Disappointed in this hope, he and his companions drove the recalcitrant Jews from their ancient habitations and, in more than one *Sura* of the Koran, he inveighs against the stubborn and impious "folk of the written scripture." This is quite true and doubtless Arabic Jew-baiters have generally justified themselves on religious grounds. What, in fact, like Aryan anti-Semites, they disliked was the Jew himself; what they disliked was the quality which caused those Arabized Jews of the cities of Yemen to reject Mohammed and endure exile and death. For what? For a religious doctrine, a metaphysical formulation, a point of faith? Nonsense. For a way of life which is to the Jew from everlasting to everlasting, which was born with him and will not die till the last of the children of Israel is hidden in the earth, which remains in its essence the same on the edge of the desert and in the salons of the quasi-assimilated in Berlin and New York, which was carried from Jerusalem to Babylon and survived the Roman way of life and weathered the Crusades and the Inquisition and the Renaissance and, seeming wholly dead, in the nineteenth century was seen to have lived a strong though subterranean existence, and re-arises in the age of science into the light to bear witness in the twilight of Mohammedanism and the failure of Christianity to the truth that many inventions will not save mankind without justice and without peace. . . .

Chapter Seven:
Of Ancestors and Immortality

I

WE HAVE taken no long voyages since our visit to Africa. Undoubtedly years of farther travel will come again. For the time I have been content to concentrate on a few simple but supreme things: home, thought, work. It has been necessary for me to organize my thinking anew, to bring into a framework of thought all that experience taught me so tardily. For, until seven years ago, I had led a life so restless and confused and chafing and rootless that I had none but the most theoretical contact with any goal of value. Like most of my kind and generation I was, to use the invaluable distinction of Nietzsche, escaping from under a yoke. But his stern question: "Free callest thou thyself? Thy ruling though I would hear and not that thou hast escaped from under a yoke"—this question would have left me, again like most of my kind and generation, silent and helpless. . . . This intellectual and moral situation is not, of course, a strange one for Americans of whatever blood or descent. The yoke is heavy, and everyone is forced to bear it. Escape, resistance, revolt, have been the exclusive preoccupations of my American generation. Magnificently and memorably these men have recorded their hatreds, sufferings, rebellions. But look into their works for their notion of the good life, the state of tomorrow, the character of the ultimate satisfactions that constitute a rational existence. You shall look in vain. So,

too, in the lives of most of them there is the element of flight. They avoid the normal because in their America the normal was from the beginning identified in their minds with the stagnant, the mean, the ugly, the tyrannous. Quite rightly so. For the Neo-Puritans belligerently declared their norms eternal ones and thus to enlightened minds the truly permanent forms and modes of human life became mean and contemptible. But these exist. Beneath all change these endure. They are rooted in man's biological structure and moral nature. Am I then no more a protestant and revolutionary? I am. But I see an aim, a direction, a goal: to liberate the eternal from the transitory, the fundamental from the ugly vagaries of shifting barbarisms, to cleanse the quest of our necessary satisfactions from force and dirt and dross. I want love free in order that marriage may be voluntary and pure; I want the centralized power of the state broken in order that every variety of human character and experience may not only function freely but influence and mould law and custom in direct proportion to its moral attractiveness and power. . . . I dream of a world in which it shall be psychologically inconceivable for any man or group to tell another what language he shall use or teach his children, whom he shall love or how he shall pray, what he shall eat or drink, where he shall dwell or what frontiers he shall cross, what he shall speak or write or cause to be printed or said or sung. . . .

For years I pleaded in speech and writing for a re-examination of human experience in order that from such a re-examination we might learn, even as the scientist learns by an appeal to the actual behaviour and properties of

things, what kinds and modes of conduct men in this age actually desired to practise in order to be reasonably happy and at one with themselves. I still believe strongly in the virtues of such a method. But I believe today that, above all in America, a good many kinds of conduct that are thus revealed are the results of resistance rather than of direct desire, of reaction rather than of creative satisfaction. I know that my own conduct was for many years deeply tinged with emotions and motives of that sort. And I have seen, for instance, a good many marriages of the kind recently called companionate and I cannot avoid the conclusion that within this type of marriage the proportion of contented people is not greater than within that older type which reckoned theoretically with permanence and with the hope of posterity. These people, with the fading of the first edge of passion, are often—I do not say always —not united by motives deep enough, near enough to the foundations of human life to make them otherwise than casual, restless, nervous, purposeless. . . . Let them change. By all means. I have no moral objection. But I wonder whether, except in cases of definite dislike or maladjustment, they have a better chance of contentment with the second partner or the third or the fourth. . . . For in many of these unions a just and proper revolt against the horrors of conventional Neo-Puritan marriage has been mistaken for a revolt against immemorial instincts, sanctities, blessings, satisfactions, and men and women, unaware of their own exact motives, rob themselves of hearth and garden, child and tree, dog and threshold. The men are restless, the childless women show strain and futile eagerness; they

all hunt meretricious excitement and clamorously declare their shoddy substitutes to be the true goods of life. . . . Honest and openly acknowledged trial marriage would be more wholesome. For it would not foolishly deny the unchanging purposes of human unions but seek rather to guard these ultimate purposes in order that they might be carried out under reasonably fair and happy conditions. . . . In any re-examination of human experience, then, we must differentiate, especially among Americans, between motives of reaction and fear and the play of positive desires and instincts. We must disengage motive and action from resistance to mouldy and tyrannous conventions, from the acrid lees of the militant phase of feminism, from all the empty affectations whereby freedom from responsibility is thought of as contributing to the nobler purposes of human life.

II

Unfreedom has corrupted or crippled human instinct—corrupted it among the conformers, crippled it among the rebellious. It takes a purged vision, suffering and the creative transcendence of suffering in this age to see clearly the simple things, to find where the true satisfactions of life are and to understand and seek them. And it is clear that one must not speak for the exceptional, but for a more or less typical human fate. The exceptions, for all the noise that is made in the world, are few. For no one can, in final fact, regard himself as exception save he whose work, whose projection of himself into mankind, is of a power and reach so obvious that he can substitute it wholly for

the things that give meaning to the general life of man. People who write useful or entertaining books or paint agreeable pictures or play an instrument well enough to be listened to in public with pleasure are no more exceptional than competent lawyers, journalists, physicians, engineers, teachers. And I have observed that the really exceptional, the truly great whom I have known, men like Albert Einstein or Thomas Mann, have not avoided but closely embraced the common, universal elements that make a normal human life. They are husbands and fathers; they guard hearth and home; they are politically and socially minded and are profoundly concerned over the fate both of their peoples and of mankind. Einstein is a Zionist leader; the liberal and republican youth of Germany turn with hope, trust, reaffirmation of their being and ideal to Thomas Mann. In my search, then, for the permanent satisfactions of life I omit the playboys of art, the "sports," valetudinarians, the psychically wounded beyond cure, the few necessary solitary anchorites and torches of the naked spirit. . . .

What I have to say here is the fruit of deep experience and direct cognition. One's work becomes, when the years of apprenticeship are over, a necessary functioning of one's organism. It has its joys in the quietude of one's study. But the joys that youth dreams of—repute, a name, *monstrari digito. prætereuntium*—these moons, to borrow Maugham's conceit, one would sell for a six-pence. There are high moments: a gesture of approval from some master, for instance. I was uplifted for three days last year by a

letter that Freud wrote me. But from these moments and days you cannot draw an active principle of energy or of tranquillity or of delight whereby to live. Simple messages are more likely to hearten one, as when a good rabbi told me the other day that certain falsely ambitious ladies of his congregation had determined, because of something I had written, no longer to send their growing boys to fashionable summer camps but to Jewish summer camps. Thus I had helped by a little, to use my old favourite phrase, to diminish the sum of futile moral suffering in the world. Such things one remembers. But what one lives by from day to day and from year to year are, though more philosophically regarded, the things that are accessible to all men: standing with one's beloved beside a sunset-window, sitting with her beside one's fire, dispensing hospitality, building the house not of art, but of life. . . .

No news, all this. Perhaps rather in a world of apartment houses and birth control and, in America, bootleg liquor, mouldy and discredited commonplaces. It is not so simple as that. These commonplaces, by which men always have lived and must, in all likelihood, still try to live, are to be saved from their present implicatedness with superstition, with cruelty, with that unspeakable patriotic "home" which raises soldiers for the state. . . . Here is the crux of the matter. Men are to be satisfied, Santayana too once declared, with simple elemental things. He names them: "food, children, victory, knowledge." Victory! That word gives away the Pagan barbarism underlying that historical Christianity for which Santayana was then so warmly pleading—historical Christianity with its master-state, its eco-

nomic competition, its violent repression of human instinct, its doctrine of love for procreation and of children for war, its force, its engines, its trenches, its hostility to both peace and knowledge, its armed camps invoking its gods. . . . Cannot the ancient sanctities of human life, its ultimate satisfactions be saved from their implications with barbarism? Cannot men desire love, children, food, knowledge, peace?

These are, at all events, the things that, having measurably freed myself from the accidents and wrongs of life, I felt that I desired and could live by. And these are the things that other people, however vagrant and rootless through chance or resistance, did also in the end desire. I found furthermore that I desired these things not only physically but metaphysically, that on them was based not only a rational life but the concept of a rational universe. And I seemed to myself to be more or less upon the proper road because the things that I desired both physically and metaphysically were things that all men desired and that were also accessible to all. Accessible to all in the long run, in the process of the development of that new humanism, of that blending of science and Hebraism, of knowledge and peace, of which I have spoken and to which I shall return. Today I know, as everyone does, people who have love, children, food, knowledge and yet have no inner peace, nor serenity nor hope. And the reason is that they hold their possessions in a void. Both religion and patriotism being wholly and hopelessly and justly discredited, men and women miss the larger connections and syntheses within which a typical human lot acquires the satisfactoriness of a good life lived in conformity with some interest that

transcends the perishable. . . . We *have* immortal longings in us. . . .

III

A group of loosely allied "intellectualists" in various countries is trying, according to its own notion, to save civilization from the corrosive criticism of the modern spirit. I do not wish to be identified with these. I am on the side of science and the industrial revolution and repudiate the order of Christian, warlike capitalism to its ultimate implications. The religion which it fosters is, in the just slogan of the Soviets, "the opiate of the people." I repudiate the "order and obedience" of the new and fashionable reactionaries and the anti-relativists. Personally naïve writers, their theories head straight for the battlefield and the pogrom. . . . I am bent upon another business. Accepting the revolutionary modern spirit in science and in economics, how are we to save the fundamental goods of life? . . . It is true that men huddle in the great cities in order to fill with excitement the void in which they live; it is true that educated people refuse to have children because they do not see life and the world as a whole within which the primal instincts and activities acquire a satisfactory meaning. These instincts and activities, though they remain the necessary bases of contentment, cannot offer that contentment in a world wholly discrete, discontinuous, jumbled. They must have a meaning that derives from another source than mere desire or inclination however strong. . . . A man and a woman build a house and beget children and practise the personal

self-denials that house and earth and gear and children demand. A cold autumnal afterglow shines behind black trees and soon the chill, innumerable stars will be out and the night, like a symbol of the unfathomable lonely universe, will fall. And each, the man and the woman, in secret thought wonders perhaps what is the reward, the personal reward, of this conventional surrender to immemorial forces. Would not, they wonder, a self-regarding life of pleasure and personal work and excitement have—in both a higher and a lower sense—paid better? We are alive so short a time; fortune is so uncertain and the fate of one's posterity is not likely to be better than one's own! Morning may disperse those stubborn questionings; dusk brings them back. . . . What people of that kind lack—and they lack it in proportion to their intelligence and sensitiveness and culture—is precisely a *religio,* a binding of their fate and their activities to some larger whole of life within which it takes on meaning and permanence. In this sense the need for religion is profound, universal and undying. And men recognize that fact and create religions, views of life and fate and the universe in their totality from which the individual act and life derives its value, even when they will very properly not use the discredited old word.

The thoughtful European and American finds himself in all these respects in an evil case today. That he cannot assent to the dogmas of his fathers is the least of his difficulties. He cannot assent to their ethos and tradition; unless he is an angry reactionary he is through with the fundamental sentiments and bindings of his civilization. Even the paid patriots disbelieve and tremble. Even

under the bloody dictatorships of Italy and Poland and Hungary there is probably gathering a force of protest that will one day fling off the oppressor and repudiate with fury the principles and traditions that ruled these evil years. No, this civilization and tradition are doomed, whether they meet their doom in another war or are repudiated soon enough by a sufficient number of men.

It is in this act of repudiation that many of the best spirits of our time seek that *Weltanschauung,* that larger view and framework, within which individual lives take on dignity and worth. Radicals and pacifists tend thus to form a great international community within which they live and work and create values for themselves and to pass on to their children. As men once hoped that their sons would be brave soldiers, so not a few hope today that their sons will be brave objectors to military servitude and state slavery. . . . And such people are, indeed, the hope of the world. But for themselves they live in a rather highly attenuated moral atmosphere. It is hard to dwell always in the realm of a cold and abstract ardour. It is hard to have no older and no warmer fire wherewith to light one's hearth. To such, even to such, will often come the doubts that rob them of the fundamental satisfactions of life and yet give them no substitute, for the simple reason that there is none.

A sentiment of piety and continuity is needed, ancestral voices that do not prophesy war or hate. The problem before Western mankind is to rebuild and reinterpret its history in the direction of complete veracity and a complete shifting of emphasis. The crimes and errors of mankind must be frankly shown up as such and the barbarism of

conflict and murder accepted by every people for itself; political history and the history of war must be subordinated, as evil and unimportant and transcended, to cultural and economic history; and the history of literature taught not as that of an art or of science as that of inventions, but both as the uniquely significant and highest expression of such a being as man in such a world and universe as the present. With such a reading of history and such a revaluing of values it will be possible for Western man once more to ally himself profoundly with his ancestors and his folk and rediscover that binding with a continuous community, embodying a special character and hope, without which life in its fundamental phases is robbed of validity and power. If, in brief, nationalism can be rendered peaceful, if it can be heightened to its cultural elements alone, piety in the ancient sense can once more lend its warmth and grace to life.

IV

I have been brought to these reflections and persuaded of their importance by both experience and observation. Long years I lived among the uprooted or rootless, myself the most wandering and rudderless of all. Not rudderless in the things of the mind, but of the heart, of the instincts, of the practical life. First came to me gradually through years the necessity and wisdom and unanswerable inner need to re-ally myself with my folk, my ancestors, my tradition; next came to me, though so late, the unique and irresistible experience of human love. And these two

blended with each other and from these arose a house of life in which both the heart and the mind can dwell in peace. . . . Symbols when their meaning is rich and present and speaks anew every day are old and honourable and not negligible elements of life. Our house, Thelma's and mine, is a Jewish house, wherein appropriate symbolical tokens—hard enough to find, alas, so far have these things fallen into neglect—of our history and its memories and its pieties are plain for all men to see. We try to avoid over-emphasis and even the shadow of going beyond our needs and convictions. So we have placed no *mezuzah* at our door, though we might easily have done so as a symbol not of a belief that Moses literally brought the commandments from Horeb nor most assuredly that those particular ten commandments are a sufficient guide to life, but of the knowledge and conviction that no people has so steadily as our own and over so long a period struggled in every act, even to the humblest and least necessity of its common day, to live the good life and to obey the highest monition that it had. . . . Nor do we, like the Italian *ritornati,* practise the *mitzvoth,* the good acts of obedience to the *halakoth,* the decisions of the sages. But we are very sure that the spirit of the decisions of the sages, profoundly applicable to modern life as it happily is, is the dominant spirit of our house. Thus we find ourselves not isolated or adrift but still as intense individuals and complete moderns members of a community that reaches back into the ultimate past of human history, forward into the limitless future—a community with its unmistakable stream of tendency, its union of strictness and flexibility, its function and its meaning

within the life of all mankind. . . . Something like this is the sentiment, no doubt, that sustains and has, especially in the past, sustained the best Europeans and given grace and order and dignity to their lives. The trouble with their tradition was and is, of course, that it included belligerent patriotism and war on the side of the communal life and, on the side of the personal life, the terrible Christian contradiction between human nature and monkish asceticism. Hence these people must rebuild and reinterpret their tradition from the ground up, whereas the Jew can accept the spirit, if not the body, of his tradition unchanged. But without a tradition, a sense of membership in an historic community of one's own, peopled by one's fathers, conformable in its tendencies to one's instincts and monitions, life is cold and colourless and its highest satisfactions slip from one's grasp. . . .

I cannot help thinking that these reflections come very near the core of life as men and women have actually lived it and will, in the long run, always want to live it. Friends tell me, indeed, of a future of society in which the family will be no more, in which men and women will go about their daily tasks in the world and meet at night and in which children will be taken care of by the community. And I have caught a glimpse of such experiments in our *kvutzoth* or agricultural communes in Palestine. The attempt is made there to transfer to the community as a unit the emotions that have historically gathered about the family as a unit. Nor am I blind to the strictly social advantages of such a transfer in theory, since it is evident that an enlargement of the elemental sympathies would lead, if prac-

ticable over a long enough period, to a very high degree of social-mindedness. Man, on the other hand, is an individual and tends, as civilization increases in complexity, to be more and not less individually minded. And the pure communist forgets that his method would, in direct proportion to its success, produce a regimentation of mentality and mode of living flatter and more colourless than that American regimentation from which some of us are trying to save America. . . . Nor is this all. I shall never forget the story that Ernst Toller, his dark beautifully modelled head half in the shadow, told us: of how in the first ardour of youth he and a group of comrades in prison determined utterly to substitute brotherhood for self-regardingness and the love of Man for separate and exclusive loves and so shared all things and gave up all psychical privacies and received no gifts except for the group and permitted each one's letters to be read by all, and how even there, amid that little band of chosen and devoted spirits this *Entpersönlichung* (depersonalization) broke down utterly and issued first in subtle irritation and finally in open rancour and revolt. . . . I am persuaded that somehow economic co-operation must take the place of economic competition. Hence I am on the side of all experiments which, however unhappy in immediate detail, have as their aim that necessary change. I am equally sure that all purely social communist ardour is strongly tinged at its source, like Walt Whitman's, like the men's house among primitive tribes, like certain phenomena in Greek civilization, by homosexual elements. Doubtless these are a constant factor in history. Constant but feeble. The normal, heterosexual man and woman will not easily aban-

don instincts that inhere in our very biological structure. The psychical by-products, if one likes to put it so, of being mammals and having helpless young are likely to persist. Shaw, the mad logician, was quite right to prophesy as the necessary accompaniment of his other predictions not only the indefinite prolongation of life, but the oviparous method of human reproduction. When eggs are laid by human beings from which eighteen-year-old children are hatched the family will, no doubt, be scrapped. . . .

V

Not yet, not now. It is amusing to me that I should be pleading for the family and for the home. But of course I do not mean the metaphysical trap of Christian marriage nor the prison of the Puritan home. I mean a voluntary union such as my people have practised for at least four and twenty centuries and such as was provided for in the contract of marriage entered into by the Egyptian Jews Miphtachja and Ashar bar Zacha in the year 440 before Christ. This contract, discovered among other Aramaic papyri in Assuan, provides for social control exclusively in property matters under eventualities with which no interference is possible. The first eventuality here, especially in view of the fact that Miphtachja was a widow, was of course that the marriage might be without issue. The second eventuality which the contract foresaw was that the woman might appear before the communal court and declare that she hated her husband or that the man might appear and declare that he hated his wife. In that case the divorce was

an inherently accomplished fact and it remained for the court merely to regulate the property interests involved. That such contractual provisions were usual and of great antiquity is clear from a passage of the tractate *Baba Bathra,* or "The Last Gate," of the Jerusalem Talmud. Rabbi José said: "And those who write in a marriage contract: 'if she should hate him; if he should hate her'—the same are expressing a condition having to do with the rights of property and as such declared legal by the Masters." In brief, I think that men will continue to will the family and the home despite both Puritan pressure and radical reaction. I have lived in Greenwich Village and I am living in Montparnasse. And there is no harm in living in these pleasant places so long as one does not identify them with the world nor their amusing experiments with the conduct of mankind. . . .

I seem then, at least to myself, to have found the source of the fundamental satisfactions by which we live. They are simple, common, difficult and constant things—these satisfactions, and, as I have said before, far harder to attain in any approach to perfection after their kind than the eccentric, the exceptional, the obviously romantic. Flight, passion, excitement, next satiety, pity, regret, last memory and the pathos of memory—these things have their special brief poetry and aroma. But repetition makes them first stale, then vulgar. Over lives that have culminated in such incidents hangs the heavy depression and ugly disillusion, the dreariness and faintness that hang over the characters in some of Schnitzler's plays and stories or the irrational moral gloom in which the fables of Dreiser issue. Moreover it is

almost needless to say that such lives must continue to be exceptional since the very notion of life assumes its continuance. Nothing is more amusing than the babble about life and the ways of life in the various Latin quarters of the world by people who are quite determined to remain permanently sterile and, in fact, to escape all human responsibilities. To mould life thus is to play with wet clay; to mould it after an eternal pattern is to carve in rock. . . .

The difficulties are great. But it is just these difficulties that are my subject; for I seem to have met them and measurably conquered them for myself. . . . For modern man, then, the meaning of life must be sought in history. I am aware of the fact that many people have no metaphysical hunger nor any desire for a significant order within which to live and function. For those, then, I am simply not writing. We others must somehow have values that we create or uphold within an order that gives them meaning and continuance. We are, of course, quite through with religion in the older sense. The cosmos, as Goethe declared long ago, has neither within nor without, neither kernel nor shell. If I say God I name by that name a concept implicit in always recurrent modes of Jewish thinking, the concept, namely, of a force, trend, direction within the universe which we continuously fortify by our co-operation, though we are free to keep as a last, faint metaphysical hope the notion that it is anterior to us. The continuous creation by ourselves of that immanent force is the ultimate meaning of the famous phrase of *Kiddush haShem,* the "Sanctification of the Name." Historic man, divided into cultural groups, creates values which in their totality constitute the meaning

of life. The creation of these values is a continuous process, coextensive with the life of the race. No man can contribute to the creation of such values in the void; he creates through them odes and traditions, even when he is revolutionary, even when he creates by destroying, that have been formed by his cultural group, by his people. Thus the creation of values that contribute to the significance of man's total life is robbed of cold abstractness and is allied to the affections and pieties of the human heart. If I, since concrete example is worth tons of theory, write a reasonably good book in the English language, I am first adding that humble bit to the values attainable by readers of English; if it is translated into other languages, the values embodied would seem to have a wider validity. But the book written by me is a Jewish book and is, first of all and at its source, an extension and development of the cultural creative process represented by the fathers that begot and the mothers that bore us even to the remotest antiquity and will, if it is worthy of any continuance of life or influence, carry on that immemorial torch of my people and their specific contribution to the values embodied in human history. Thus all activity takes on a dignity, a significance, a largeness, which justify and render rational both work and life. And what is true of my particular business of writing books is true of all work and it is also true of play, of appreciation, of all co-operation—sometimes, again, by revolution and overthrow—in the creation of historic and human values.

The American, the Englishman, German, Frenchman is, of course, in a much happier position than I. His race and speech and soil are one. He creates directly, I indirectly.

There are to him no obstacles between source and stream. His path, since he lives entirely within his ancestral culture, is clear from the beginning. But the process and the meaning are the same. Work and life in this simple and, after all, natural view which, in fact, many people take instinctively, have warmth, hope, richness and an instant inner reward.

VI

By implication, at least, I have built up, I trust, a picture of what seems to me a satisfactory human life, a life that is contented with the primal necessities of food, love, children, knowledge, peace—peace as both condition and final aim of all else—because it holds these goods upon no accidental tenure nor within a void, but consciously within a permanent creative process which, though gathering energy from definite memories, pieties, traditions, is yet seen clearly as constantly contributing to the meaning of existence for the race. It is this final vision, of course, that must be kept quite steady; the individual must never lose the guiding sense that he belongs to two communities, first to the historic community of his people, next to the universal community of mankind. And I am quite aware of the enormous difficulty of persuading a Pole, let us say, to do nothing as a Pole which will endanger the peace and civilization of all men. In other words, the view of life which I hold includes nationalism. It must. It reckons with the facts. Men and women, I repeat once more, exist only as members of cultural groups with definite heritages, tastes,

instincts, reactions to man and nature and human life. They are born so and only so. But precisely as in the economic life we must substitute co-operation for competition, thus in the life of the various nationalities we must do the same thing. All theories of life, all attempts to lead a life of reason presuppose that somehow two problems can be solved by mankind and two aims realized, that science can be rendered exclusively beneficent and nationalism wholly peaceful. It is clear, too, that these two problems are closely connected. If the Pole can be gotten to see that it is, strictly speaking, insane to try to Polonize Ruthenians and the Italian that it is equally insane to Italianize the Tyrolese; if, in brief, the notion, not unknown in America, that the state is God and the tax-gatherer his prophet can be definitely abandoned, the chemists who make poison gas might find the manufacture of serums a more profitable as well as a decenter occupation. . . . I do not think these hopes wholly vain. The best minds of the sixteenth century believed in witchcraft and a personal devil and the most enlightened of Romans consented to the deification of the emperors. The stupidest reactionary or Fundamentalist dismisses such notions as absurd today. Similarly it is quite possible, nor are signs wholly wanting, that the identification of nationalism with an absolutely sovereign state will go the way of other superstitions. The central Government of the Soviet Union has set a memorable example by limiting its own powers in this respect. In the republics of the union there are as many languages taught and spoken, as many traditions cultivated and sustained as there are peoples or even tribes within its vast territories and our friend Sholom Asch

came back from the Crimea the other day half amused and half uplifted at having witnessed a court of law conducted in the Yiddish language. The separation of nationalism from force and belligerency requires no miracle, no change in human nature. The bitter rebellion of the Ruthenians in Poland takes its edge from the fact that these people see their brethren across the Russian frontier enjoying the completest cultural freedom while their own schools are closed, their newspapers confiscated and their societies dispersed.

If, then, I assume cultural nationalism as the necessary frame of a contented and a rational life, I refuse to be daunted by being told of the notorious insanities of the nationalistic instinct. For not only is there the contrary example of the Soviet Union. There is Switzerland where three national cultures coexist in perfect peace within a single political organization and there is every present sign that Flemings and Walloons in Belgium, Germans and Czechs in Czecho-Slovakia are on the road to a similar mutual tolerance and to a similar co-operation. It was one of the most hopeful signs in a sufficiently gloomy world when the Czecho-Slovakian state prize for excellence in literature was awarded the other day to the German-writing Jew Franz Werfel. . . .

Arnold Zweig, the Jewish novelist and thinker, has written a treatise on the phenomena of nationalism which is literally epoch-making. His material is so profoundly involved with conditions in Central Europe that his book is not likely to be translated into English. Hence I am doing him no disservice by explaining one or two of the concepts which he used to throw light upon dark places

of the human psyche. In the primitive herd-man that dwells, more or less curbed and conquered, in each of us, every perception of human difference releases instinctive reactions of (a) arrogance as a defence against the possibility of fear, (b) contempt of the different-seeming one as self-fortification of the will to victory in case of conflict, or (c) genuine fear which, again, is likely to issue in excessive over-valuation of one's self, kind, type, tribe and irrational depreciation and hate of the other-seeming one. And Zweig invites us to study the press of all countries during the World War in order to become aware of the unbridled emergence of these quite simple and primitive reactions under the most various and subtle disguises. But daily life even in peace offers its immediate examples of the truth of this analysis. Zweig points out humorously that Russians call cockroaches Prussians, and Prussians call them Russians. One may add that such expressions as dago, frog-eater, wop, bohunk, kike, all the contemptuous names whereby the folk of each kind stigmatizes every other kind, bear witness to that same curious fear and suspicion masking itself instinctively in defensive contempt. And who has not seen American tourists in Europe, especially business men, uneasily aware of the fact that they ought, as tourists and sightseers, not let perceptions of difference issue in contempt and yet half bristling from time to time with little outbursts of arrogance excited by the fear that America may not be, in all respects, God's only country and their particular town the hub of the universe? In times of conflict and terror these slight reactions become monstrous and maddening passions. But we are on a hopeful road, for we

are at last, thanks to the incomparable discoveries and speculations of Sigmund Freud, attaining clarity and knowledge concerning these obscure instincts. We have the scientific proof that hot patriotism is allied to fear-neurosis and can establish the psychical identity of the belligerent nationalist, the neurotic patient and the primitive herd-man. Thus these instincts can be trained, curbed, wholly suppressed as they have already measurably been in certain countries and among definite human groups.

I dwell upon this matter because I have already been accused of playing into the hands of the dangerous nationalist by my reidentification with my own nationality; I shall be accused of doing so again by my expressed conviction that a rational life, a life in which the ultimate and permanent satisfactions gain their true place and value and meaning, can be lived only within the stream of tradition that is native to one's blood and heart. My reply is, after all, the old, old one that you cannot argue against the use of a thing from its abuse. You cannot do so, above all, when the thing is so inextricably knitted into the very texture of life itself. One does belong to some cultural group, folk, tradition. One cannot get beyond that classification. One can try to change from one group to another. A bad business and probably a failure. For the Jew the change is most ominous. His own group has at least the felicity of having no power. Within it he is measurably secure from the crimes and passions and re-emergence of primitive instincts which power and belligerency entail. As a Jew he has the best chance of co-operating with all other civilized forces

in solving the two problems that face mankind: to render science beneficent and nationalism peaceful.

VII

The discoveries of Freud clarify our problems; their practical uses in the education of both adults and of the young are very great. But knowledge, science, cognition—these are not enough. For direct influence in the world's business and activities something is needed that will touch the heart, that will blend with the instincts and the spirit of man. In the search for such an influence we are brought back once more to the testing and the weighing of the two forces of Hellenism and Hebraism, which I foreshadowed at the end of my third chapter. Nor is such a testing and weighing an old story. It is an adventure to excite the dullest. For older writers who discussed this matter, such as Matthew Arnold, had but the most conventional and drained notion and thought of Hellenism as a cult of beauty and Hebraism as Puritan resistance to the world. Even Heine fell into a similar error. He said farewell to the Venus of Milo when he was sick in body and soul and could no longer be amid her active worshippers and drew about himself, like a sombre cloak, a vision of Hebraism deeply tinged with Christian interpretation.

These notions need to be revised and corrected by the discipline of historic fact. The roses and raptures of Hellenism are a literary convention and only youthful artists of doubtful sexuality play with them feebly and for a space. The world is serious at its core and the Hellenic forces that have

survived as active forces in the process of civilization are those that may be symbolized by the names of Euripides and Lucretius. It is the fearless mind, the scientific temper that are our heritage from classical antiquity—our living heritage. Nor can it be denied that for the highest type of scientifically minded modern this heritage is of sufficient saving power. Not for the world. Not for mankind as a whole. The average man is a more powerful barbarian for the tools that science puts into his hand and scientific engines of war destroy more life than a Pasteur or an Ehrlich can save. If every other generation is to be shell-shocked the Freudian therapeutics have small chance of sanitating the mind of either the individual or the mass. Science is not enough. England tests the devastatingness of air-raids on civilian populations, France arms the peoples of Africa, America clamours for an enormous navy. Science saves with one hand and destroys with the other. A next war would finish what the World War began. . . .

Need I repeat, I or any man, the story of the moral self-destruction of historical Christianity? Wherever that ethos is most powerful in any of its forms, in Poland, Italy, Georgia or Texas, the story is the same—repression, cruelty, belligerent patriotism, darkness of mind and corruption of heart. All tempering influences are dead. Fierce Catholics plot to restore kings and despotisms, fierce Protestants in Germany or America are drunk with the psychosis of Nordic pseudo-supremacy and identify their religion with smiting and humiliating all who do not share their colour, speech or custom. . . .

But is not, it will be asked at once, is not Christianity

—even as Matthew Arnold conceived of it—the living embodiment of Hebraism, its only development amid the peoples of the West? And the answer which should reach all Gentiles and all Jews forgetful of their history is: it is not; it has nothing to do with Hebraism, but is utterly alienated therefrom. *Ur-Christentum,* pre-Pauline Christianity was a private Jewish matter. A sect arose and died. Pauline Christianity, that mixture of a decadent Hellenism and hostile-minded Jewish borrowings and curious Eastern superstitions and, at that, both the polytheism and polity of Rome—this religion, redeemed at a thousand moments in noble minds by the abstracted image of its supposed founder and then redeemed by the only Hebraic element in it, has as a religion and an historic force no part in the Hebraic ethos and tradition.

Then where are we to seek Hebraism, both Gentile and forgetful Jews will ask. For both share the secular superstition that Hebraism, having made its great effort in giving birth to Christianity, remained stagnant and sterile, the unsaving faith of a people of stubborn wanderers and outcasts. It is this superstition, above all, that must be destroyed. Neither Christianity as a Jewish schism nor as a developing international religion touched Hebraism or the Hebraic spirit at all. References to it in Rabbinical literature are few and casual. As a worldly force first intensifying, then replacing the oppression of Rome, it had to be reckoned with. As an ethical or spiritual force it was simply disregarded. It had nothing to do with the Jews, with their religion or their way of life. For from all Jewish or humane mani-

festations of the new religion the Jews themselves were rigorously excluded. Nor is this all, nor, indeed, the chief consideration. The chief consideration is this, that precisely in the first two Christian centuries Hebraism as a religion and an ethos underwent a development of unexampled importance and became that way of life which has not only sustained Israel through the ages but has in this day and in this generation unexhausted forces for all the world to use.

It was in the year 70 of the Christian era that the emperor Titus—Titus *ha'rasha,* the impious one—destroyed the second Temple. You can read the account of that dreadful day, the first of a series of dreadful days, in the pages of Josephus. With the destruction of the Temple the priestly and sacrificial cult of the Jews was destroyed. For among this people there was but one temple and one altar. Synagogues, houses of meeting and private prayer and study, already existed in great numbers and may, indeed, have come into existence in Babylon during the captivity. These remained. Hence the religion of the Jewish people was suddenly laicized. Priests and sacrifices and tangible mysteries were no more. The immemorial medicine-man, mediator, priest, was eliminated. Learned men, masters, interpreters, teachers assumed the leadership of the people and have held it ever since. But an enormously curious and significant fact is that the laicizing of Judaism had long been an apparently inevitable process. For generations we hear nothing significant of any high priest, in spite of his princely station and dignity. The learned man, the interpreter, teacher, law-giver had for at least two centuries

focused the attention of the people and spoken the decisive word in both their secular and religious councils. The great names are the names of reformers and interpreters, of Hillel and Gamaliel I. The mind of the nation had moved away from the ecclesiastical and hence the destruction of the Temple, tragic and bitterly felt as a national calamity though it was, had no chance of being a spiritual calamity. The dispersed teachers soon gathered again to interpret the law for Israel. To the little town of Jabne, some miles south of Jaffa, withdrew the aged Jochanan ben Zakkai and a group both of learned men and of students. Here they went about their task of consolidating the law, the traditions, the ethos of a people which would lift that people's integrity and persistence beyond the need of political independence, beyond the need of homeland, power, or even settled dwelling place. Working in the tradition of the mild and humane Hillel, the originator of the Golden Rule borrowed by the Gospel, Jochanan ben Zakkai and his colleagues undertook the task of arranging and clarifying those interpretations of the Torah, or instruction of God to man, which had arisen as a guide of life ever since the days of Ezra and the return of the exiles from Babylon. Gamaliel II, a powerful, passionate and yet politic man, continued with his learned colleagues the work laid down by Jochanan ben Zakkai. He reformed and fixed the synagogal liturgy. But chiefly these men were bent upon finding in the oral teachings and decisions of their predecessors a code and way of life that was to be decisive at any given moment but likewise carry within itself a principle and a

method for its enlargement and continuous flexibility. This work of clarifying, expanding and ordering the oral tradition was enormously furthered by the great Rabbi Akiba in the second century and completed under the guidance of the even more revered Rabbi Jehuda ha'Nasi early in the third. Thus, separated from the Temple, from all ecclesiastical and ceremonial and therefore rigid influences came into being the *Mishna,* the oral law or codified interpretative tradition which, by means of further commentary and explication, of the exercise of the intellect and imagination and memory of many generations of sages, became both core and starting-point of that great Study (*Talmud:* study; *talmid:* student) which is the chief repository of the Hebraic spirit. The chief, but not an only or completed one. The sages Chachamim of Israel are not conceived of as having perished in this generation or in that. The "vineyard" of Jabne gave place to the teachers of Tiberias and these, in turn, to the masters of the Babylonian academies; the intellectual centre of the nation dwelled briefly in Kairuan to be then shifted at last to Europe. As among all people, so among the Jews, a high reverence is paid to antiquity, to men who lived in simpler and perhaps holier ages. But the unbroken tradition of Hebraism from Ezra to this day is infinitely varied and is one and has, without any loss of spiritual integrity, adapted itself to civilization after civilization, to age after age, and kept its bearers a cultural and ethnic entity through all the storms and cataclysms of time. In that long and living tradition the force of Hebraism is to be sought, the force that may yet curb

the excesses and cruelties of Hellenism and, blending with the better part of the Hellenic tradition, lead to a way of life whose name is peace.

VIII

How is it that I, a critic of literature and a writer of stories, come to deal with these hard and intricate matters? Because living experience drew me irresistibly toward them. I discovered first that my true self is a Jewish self, even as the true self of one friend that I have is American and of another German and of another French. But that Jewish consciousness of mine had little or no Jewish content. And so, without abandoning or for one moment misprizing the American and European content of my mind, I went in search of a Jewish content wherewith to satisfy my Jewish instincts and also to quicken and enrich with what is mine by birth and blood that which is mine by study and by love. . . . That was my first discovery and my first task. And next I discovered late but unanswerably that human love involved certain consequences and certain shaping impulses: the impulse to found a home, to establish a place and centre that was to be, must be, beyond itself, a link in the chain of a people. Necessarily, then, of my people. And that brought me to the need of cultural nationalism for a life that was not to be lived in the void. Old sanctities led me to old pieties. But I was not only a Jew and a husband. I was and am also a modern man, acutely aware of the forces that seem, but only seem, I think, to oppose that way of life

which had come to me to be not only beautiful but rational. It was necessary then to face those forces once more. And they were my old, old enemies, as they are the enemies and diseases of mankind, the tyrant nationalistic State which needed not to be a tyrant if it did not reckon with the possibility of war—the stupid, arrogant, primitive fighting spirit which corrupts science and contorts nationalism and is seen, upon the analysis of its far-reaching implications, to ruin every rational hope, to poison every natural aspiration of mankind. But is it not said that Israel's mission is peace? It is at least true that peace has been the centre of both Jewish ideology and practice for precisely eighteen hundred years. That is a longer record than any other people can show. What more natural, then, than that a Jew should strive to accomplish the realization of peace? I am under no illusions as to what one man or his books can effect. None. But having given what one has to give, one's duty is accomplished and one's mind at rest.

Finally there arose another circumstance. Out of experience, more largely out of observation, I was impelled to write the story called *The Island Within*. And almost from the moment of its publication on I have been asked by letter and by word of mouth the question: You want us to be Jews, even as other people are Americans or Englishmen, and we feel profoundly that we want to be Jews and that, by being such, we shall be freed of conflicts and pains and difficulties that now beset us. But wherewith shall we be Jews? What is the content of that Jewish tradition of which you speak? Well, I must tell the little that I know,

first perhaps for these Jews, but equally for the Gentile world that needs also to know and even to be taught by the tradition of Hebraism—the tradition that has at least this supreme example to offer: the union of nationalism and peace.

Chapter Eight:
The Great Study

I

THE great study has been the chief intellectual experience of my recent years. I know as yet only a very little. One needs to begin that study in youth. But I already know enough to be assured that all popular or semi-popular notions of the Talmud are worse than absurd. They are mere superstitions; they do not touch the subject at all. . . . And first, to illustrate both the antiquity and the continuance of the Hebraic tradition, it is necessary to make clear the character of the *Mishna,* the oral teaching, and of the *Gemara,* its interpretation and commentary. The authors of this literature, from Rabbi Akiba to Rabbi Judah the Prince, from the doctors of Tiberias in the third century to those of Babylon in the fifth, invented nothing of either law or legend but were recorders and interpreters upon a theory which happens to be in close accord with the historic facts. The theory was that all that had been handed down to them as well as all that study and reflection gave them was already implicitly present in the Torah, the basic instruction of God to man. And since, according to their belief, the Torah was eternal, it was possible for all men in all ages to draw therefrom the implicit, inexhaustible truth wherewith to guide their thoughts and lives in the assurance that all they taught on that basis was part of the actual revelation which thus took on an endless and progressive character. The facts behind this theory are that

the Torah is a very imperfect compendium of the folkways and convictions of Israel, presupposing, at almost every step, an anterior or coexistent body of unrecorded custom law or of the means by which the recorded regulations could be carried out. Upon this oral tradition, which did in fact exist, the authors of the Talmud drew; by adding to it they were not conscious of any innovation. Precisely as, for instance, Joseph observed the seven-days mourning for his father long before the Mosaic period and did so according to the eternal but yet unwritten Torah, even thus may men in the course of new ages derive from that same eternal Torah, written or unwritten, the sanctions of their conduct. The Jewish revelation, in brief, is no sudden, catastrophic event that, one fine day, substituted divine truth for human error. It is, even to the orthodox Jew, a revelation that has neither beginning nor end; it is, in sober fact, in its totality of written and oral tradition, of law, legend, and speculation, the expression of the character and aspirations of Israel from the remotest antiquity on.

When the Temple fell in the year 70 of our era and the religion of the Jews became necessarily laicized and passed for all time from the priests to the sages, when the entire structure of the national life was crushed, the need was felt first to arrange, next to record the unwritten portions of the eternal instruction in order that no tittle of it might be lost in war or exile. "From the day on which the Holy House was destroyed, God has nothing more in this world than the four ells of the *Halakah*," we read. That is to say, Israel had no guidance but the *way* implicit in its tradition. Hence our passage goes on: "Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Assi,

although there were thirteen houses of prayer in Tiberias, yet prayed between the columns where they had been studying." There was no altar, no *ecclesia.* Judaism became consciously a way of life. "While the Temple stood, remission of sin was obtained at the altar. It is the table spread for the poor which is now the sacrifice pleasing to God."

The sages who first assembled the *halakoth,* the ways or commands implicit in the continuous revelation in the *Mishna,* or oral teaching; the later sages who recorded the *hagadoth* (singular: *hagadah*), or interpretative lessons in the *Gemara,* or completion of that revelation, were all acutely conscious of the theory I have outlined. Thus we read in the highly condensed Talmudic text: "Furthermore said Rabbi Levi ben Chama reporting the words of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish: What is that which is written (Exodus 24:12): 'I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them.' Torah is the *Mikra* (the recorded law) and the commandment is the *Mishna;* 'which I have written' are the prophets and the hagiographers, while that which 'thou mayest teach them' is the *Gemara.* Therewith he teaches that all these were given to Moshe on Sinai." The divine sanction thus affirmed of both the oral and the written law was definitely felt to have its seat in the purged and considerate human mind. No new voice from heaven was needed. "Every verse of scripture is susceptible of several interpretations." Nor is this all. "Whatever a wise disciple shall ever be able to teach in the presence of his rabbi, was already said to Moses on Sinai." In brief, Israel

creates its revelation as it lives and experiences and suffers. It created that revelation first in the Torah, next in the great recorded traditions of the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds and of the later commentaries known as *Midrashim,* last and continuously through its enlightened and devoted sons from age to age.

Whatever was the tradition of Israel in early and semi-barbarous ages, the Talmudic record of it which we possess was made by laymen in an ethically enlightened age. No final ordering or recording of the existent material was attempted, as I have pointed out, until after the fall of the Temple and the disappearance of the priesthood. The authors of the Talmud, whose names and well-defined personalities can be studied in their great collective work, called themselves and have since been called *chachamim,* wise men or sages. They laid claim to no special inspiration or grace, though these were often assigned to them in folk-lore and legend. They relied upon wisdom and goodness. The saintliness of their lives was drawn from reason and from the experience of the human heart. They were neither anchorites nor mystagogues. They were lovers, husbands, fathers, students, councillors, leaders, men. They were called *Rab,* sir, or *Rabbi,* master, or, at most, *Rabban,* our chief master or teacher. They were themselves quite clear about their character. "A wise man (*chacham*), though he be of illegitimate birth (*mamzer*), shall take precedence over an ignorant high priest." They go farther: "The wise man is superior to the prophet. . . . The wise man is superior to a king. If he dies he cannot be replaced. If a king dies anybody can replace him." It is a note not of pride but of

profound assurance that sounds in their greatest sayings concerning themselves and their ultimate ideals, as in that memorable sentence of Rabbi Chanina: *"Talmidei hachachamim marbim shalom b'olam.* The disciples of the sages shall make peace to prevail upon the earth." If one were seeking for one saying wherewith to characterize the whole Talmudic and Midrashic literature after its innermost and highest spirit, one would always come back to that; if one wanted to sum up the spirit of Judaism and of Jewry across the ages, one would come back to that saying too. The human ideal is the man of wisdom, wisdom of mind and heart; the aim of wisdom is to establish peace.

A warning must be sounded. The six thousand folio pages of the Babylonian Talmud were composed in several countries and in the course of nearly five hundred years; the Midrashic treatises extend from the *Mechilta* in the second century of our era to the *Yalkut Shimoni* in the thirteenth. During a thousand years an entire people poured its life into these records. Hence they are like life: full of at least apparent contradictions; they have their moments of wildness and of excess and of bitterness and of confusion and of superstition. Yet their essential spirit is so clear and burns with so bright a flame through the detritus of the ages that learned and well-disposed Gentiles like Hermann Strack and Travers Herford have seen and followed and proclaimed that spirit.

I shall give two typical instances of the teachings of the sages before proceeding to a more detailed characterization of the contents of the Talmud. Concerning the laws and statutes of the Torah it is said in Leviticus 18:5 "He (man)

shall live by them." The sages, emphasizing the word *live,* add: "not die by them!" And from this implicated added teaching they draw a thousand easements and rob the law of unhuman rigidness and adapt it to the needs of such a being as man in such a world as the present. "To derogate from the Torah is often in its interest," they proclaim at length and illustrate this teaching through innumerable examples and decisions. From this instance of Rabbinical interpretation two things are clear: one, how spiritually rich the notorious pilpulism, or hair-splitting, of the Talmud can be; two, how false to the best spirit of Judaism is the accusation of mere empty formalism which was first made for controversial purposes by the authors of the Gospels and has since become an established tradition of Christendom.

My second typical instance is no less significant. What Gentile and what Jew, ignorant of his people's past and wisdom, has not shuddered at the notorious *lex talionis:* "breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth"? We know not from what barbarous period of early Semitic history this saying was left over. We do know that the historic Jewish people has never considered this principle of revenge as a conceivable rule of action. The immemorial tradition on the matter is summed up in the *Mishna:* "Whoever injures his neighbour is obligated to five payments: damages, for the pain suffered, for the costs of healing, for the loss of time, for the hurt done to human dignity." The *Mishna* then proceeds to establish principles according to which the fines are to be estimated. In the illustrative passage of *Gemara* on this point a moral passion restrains itself with difficulty: "Eye for eye—the Allmerciful said? And

you imagine that He meant the eye of the body? Such a thought cannot enter your soul!" The thought has never entered a Jewish soul except that of the ignorant assimilationist. For the Jew has never lived by the Torah except as interpreted by the equally revered, ancient, authoritative oral tradition. The two are, in fact, one; neither is conceived of as existing without the other. Hence the rabbis of various ages were wholly in the right when they combated such sects as the Karaites who accepted the Torah but rejected the Talmud as both impious and reactionary. The Jewish ethos, in brief, is not the rigid ethos of one book; it is the ethos of that book as interpreted by the experience, the developing wisdom, the spiritual enrichment of the people throughout the ages. It arose long before the Torah or Pentateuch was written down; it is alive and can be creative in our time and in this generation.

II

The ethos of Israel is realistic. It accepts nature. It seeks to curb and guide, not to destroy. It is overwhelmingly concerned with conduct, but with the conduct of man, not of some fictive being. It holds to the middle path of civilized reality between Pagan self-destructiveness and Christian asceticism. The sages never lost sight of their fundamental maxim: "If the passions did not exist, no man would build a house nor engage in trade nor take a woman in marriage nor beget a child." This entire candour leads to very fruitful admissions: "The greater the man, the more powerful will be his passions." It sees the right release from

undue passionate preoccupation in marriage. But though the sages insist again and again on both the human and religious necessity of marriage and do not weary of declaring that the celibate life is a death in life, their candour does not leave them when they regard the actual difficulties of human relationships. "A well assorted couple is as rare a thing as the miracle of the Red Sea." Nor are they afraid of stern decisions: "If one has the ill luck to have a wicked wife (*ishah rah*) one's duty is to repudiate her." But they are far more insistent on giving the counsel of kindness and of wisdom: "He who loves his wife as himself, and honours her more than himself, and guides his children in the ways of virtue and marries them at the proper age—to him is the promise of peace and fireside happiness." The Talmudic advice will sometimes go into close and even amusing detail: "For food and drink let a man spend less than he can afford; let him be garbed in proportion to his means; let him honour his wife and children beyond them." From the contexts of these passages there arises a picture of the high position of woman throughout the ages; there comes the sense of a deep seriousness in the treatment of human love as the central force of life.

The tradition is anti-ascetic in its entirety. "It is forbidden to mortify oneself by fasts," the virtue of the few appointed fasts is "in the alms to which they impel." "No feast without wine." Gloom is no part of this ethos nor any cheapening of the delights of mortality. There is a very decisive passage in the tractate which bears the title of *Taanith,* or Fasts, which deserves quotation in full: "It is written: 'He shall make atonement for that he has sinned

against the soul.' Against whose soul did he sin? Against his own in that he denied himself the pleasure of wine. Now one can derive the more serious command from the less serious. If he who merely denies himself wine be called a sinner, how much more gravely does he sin who withholds himself from all delights." It is perfectly clear that the Puritan or general Protestant interpretation of the Old Testament is wholly un-Jewish, un-Hebraic. It is Northern, Pauline, morose. But it had no access to the overshadowing fact that the Torah has never been obeyed or interpreted by Jews except in the light of the coeval and coexistent oral tradition. And that tradition has under all its gravity and moral responsibility a core of joy. It does not turn its face from beauty. Its repudiation of the plastic arts derives from the hard fact that in the ages when it grew these arts were almost exclusively the instruments of cruel or frivolous superstition. There is a debate in the Talmud as to whether statues are not harmless that do not include the symbols of heathen worship or the more degrading suggestion of the deification of weak-minded and licentious emperors. Great sages upheld the affirmative. But the majority decided that the danger was too serious to be trifled with. The danger that they saw, however, was not the danger of beauty. "He who would see in symbol the beauty of Rabbi Jochanan, let him take a beaker of silver fresh from the polisher's hand and let him fill it with the seeds of the pomegranate and wreathe it with red roses and set it between the sunlight and the shadow." No, the Talmudic sages had moments in which they saw not only the fire of beauty but the tragedy of its quenching and at the same time the essential tragedy of

human fate which forces us to wring a bitter satisfaction from suffering. I must try to transcribe that deep and memorable legend which contains both of these perceptions. "Rabbi Eliezer was ill. There came to him Rabbi Jochanan and saw that the sick man lay in a darkened chamber. Jochanan bared his arm and a beam of light fell upon it. And he saw that Eliezer wept. He said to him: 'Why weepest thou? If it is because thou hast not greatly studied the Law, remember our teaching that, whether one studies much or studies little, the chief thing is to have one's heart set on eternal things. Dost thou weep because of thy poverty? There are few who attain more. Or dost thou weep because of thy childlessness? Behold I had ten children and they were all taken from me.' Eliezer answered and said: 'I weep for this beauty that will one day fall into corruption in the earth.' Jochanan spoke: 'Thou doest well to weep therefor.' And both wept. Again Jochanan spoke: 'Are thy sufferings dear to thee?' 'Neither the sufferings nor their reward,' Eliezer answered. And Jochanan took Eliezer by the hand and raised him up."

How infinitely far that is from Paganism and how equally far from Christianty! Beauty is neither mere delight nor mere menace. It is inherent and divine and passes; suffering is neither a grim accident nor a blessing, but the sign and symbol of the tragic character of human life. From the highest illustrations of their central reactions the sages can pass to plain and humble ones. "While the prophet Elijah was conversing with Rabbi Baroka two brothers passed. The prophet said: 'These two will have their share in the world to come.' Rabbi Baroka went to the two men

and inquired after their calling: 'We are strolling jesters who cheer the downcast and, where we see conflict among men, seek to establish peace.'" . . . The ethos of the sages is realistic and not ascetic. To the Hebraic spirit man and nature are beautiful but tragic. Its aim is to mitigate that tragedy not by despising man and nature but by healing the suffering that is under the sun.

III

The tradition is not authoritarian and metaphysical; it is democratic and psychological. It assumes at every moment a divine law that must be obeyed; this law, however, being no edict superimposed after conversion but the slowly elaborated expression of the character of a people, is both natural and elastic. It is meticulous about little things, such as the precise meaning of the sabbatical rest; it is large-minded and humane concerning all that imports most. This is, of course, the spirit of the prophets too. But the sages who recorded the tradition were dealing with sober, practical affairs. With an incomparable eloquence the prophets cry for justice. The sages try to regulate the means by which justice may be expressed in human society. "The legislator must take care to enact no general law which the majority of the people is incapable of observing." In a definite discussion this principle is even more democratically formulated: "Any enactment of a court which is not accepted by the majority of the people is null and void." And the sages were perfectly aware of the grounds of this decision. "Custom prevails against law." They knew, in brief,

that law follows the folk-ways but cannot create them. They knew the futility of force. "A head (*parnas*) must not be imposed on a community; he must be accepted after free deliberation." They had, of course, their quite modern problems to deal with. Thus the patriarch Gamaliel II admitted the arbitrariness of his rule but justified it on the principle that in moments of great national danger the inner cohesion of the people was the first necessity. Like Gandhi he was determined to create the single-mindedness which passive resistance to brutal force demands.

The warmth of the prophetic passion is not absent from the Talmudic text. "Facing a tribunal the poorest in Israel shall be regarded as people of high station who have lost their fortune, for equally with the rich they are descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." But practical regulations are numerous, such as that "the debates of a court shall be public and the liberty of defence shall be absolute" or that —even more amazingly—"the employer shall be obliged to take all precautions to prevent accidents." But in many of these practical discussions there is, despite the extreme concision and laconic dryness of the Talmudic style and manner, a sudden exquisite and touching human note. "The tribunal that condemns to death once in seven years is a murderous tribunal. Rabbi Eliezer ben Azaria said: 'If it condemns once in seventy years!' Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Tarfon said: 'If we were members of the court no man would ever be condemned to death.'" Let it be remembered that the sages here mentioned by name had this conversation in Jabne around the year 90 of our era, that they were bitterly hostile to the rising Christian heresy, that they

drew their sentiments from the immemorial tradition of their people and from their own consenting hearts.

It is needless to explain that popular education was a necessary inference from the entire theory of Judaism. No man could practise the law without knowing it. He had to read the recorded law and, until a late period, memorize the oral law. The *am ha'aretz,* the man of the earth, the more or less illiterate was the proletarian in that order. There were many such, especially in Galilee. To rise at all in the world or in the estimation of one's fellows it was necessary to be literate; for any high estimation it was necessary to be learned. Some of the very greatest sages to whom all Israel looked up were day-labourers who studied and taught mornings and evenings. It follows that some measure of education, with its direct democratizing influence, was among the aims and hopes of all but the most shiftless and dull-witted. In brief, the situation observed in Jewry today, both by its friends and by its enemies, is the result of millennial traditions and habits of thought. "The world is sustained by the pure breath of the children who are in school—*shel beth rabban,* in the teacher's house," we read. And again: "It is forbidden to interrupt the teaching *shel beth rabban,* even if that act were needed to rebuild the Temple." Yes, for above the Temple and its ritual is the eternal Jewish ethos, democratic, humane, compassionate, which arose before any Temple was built and has long survived its destruction. "Justice, truth, peace—*ha'din, emeth, shalom*—are always found together and constitute one and the same thing." It is "because of the delay or the twisting of justice" that "the sword comes over the earth." Humility, learning and mercy

alone will bring nearer that Messianic age which will be distinguished "from all actual epochs by the enfranchisement of the nations." . . .

I have said that the tradition is not metaphysical. Curtly Akiba announced: "All is foreseen but free choice is given." Perhaps he was aware of the absurd contradiction involved. For he adds at once: "The world is judged by loving-kindness." He is relieved to be on his proper ground again. But this speculative weakness and, if one likes, logical confusion kept Jewish ethics close to the facts of life. There is no original sin in this system; there is no touch of Manichaeism or of undue self-torment. The problem of evil is definitely attacked at no point, so far as I know. It is practically and very happily transcended in thought by a tireless meliorism and in conduct by endless emphasis on the necessity of such action as will bring better things about. To the sages the observed facts of life from which to proceed were simple enough. "Good men (*zadikkim*) are governed by the good inclination (*yetzer tob*), wicked men (*resha'im*) by the evil inclination (*yetzer ra*); average men now by the one, now by the other." These terms, the good inclination or impulse and the evil inclination, which recur in the Jewish literature of all ages, are not the names of two hopelessly opposed natures in the Pauline sense. Dualism is abhorrent to the Jew whether in metaphysics or in morals. Few men are wholly evil in theory; in practice none are. *Yetzer tob* and *yetzer ra* are psychologically and morally different aspects of the same thing. A late but by no means unhistorical interpretation has it that man can serve God with the evil impulse too. Evil exists. "Satan, *yetzer ha'ra*,

messenger of death—these terms mean one and the same thing." It exists. But, by and large, man is a sufferer from it rather than its originator. That is why if a man has sinned "he can become reconciled with God by simple words." If he have offended his neighbour he must make reparation to the uttermost; God demands a simple interior act of penitence alone. There is no unforgivable sin nor original taint nor irretrievable fall in Jewish ethics. The statement that if the fathers have eaten sour grapes the children's teeth shall be set on edge is the prophetic statement of a sound observable scientific fact. It has nothing to do with a theory of retributive justice.

The great tradition has insight into the heart of man, and true insight and compassion are one. "No man declares himself *rasha,* a sinner." Every human soul has its case to plead. The plea may be an erroneous one since "never would man sin, had not a breath of madness first entered into him" and since "God gives wisdom (*chachmah*) only to those who have already a wise heart." Yet the plea of every human soul has its weight. For both man and conduct are complicated and it is the spirit that counts, not the letter, the subjective, not the objective. No more absurd reproach has ever been made against Jewish ethics than that of a hard and unfeeling formalism. Suffering has engendered bitterness and under persecution the apostate has been harshly regarded. But the spirit of merciful understanding which has issued in psychoanalysis and kindred substitutions of healing for damnation—that spirit is an integral part of the tradition of Israel. Thus we read: "He who sins in the conviction that he is acting righteously has as much or per-

haps even more merit than he who accomplishes a good work unmoved by any feeling of piety." And again: "If a man has the intention to perform a good action and has been prevented God will recompense him as though the action had been accomplished. *But evil intentions are not punished like evil deeds.*" Is not that a merciful distinction? It is the spirit that counts but, above all, the spirit of good. Not, once more, of a formal and self-sufficing goodness. "When one accomplishes a good action, it should be done with joy," and "charity is rewarded only according to the degree of goodness (*hesed*) which it contains." No wonder that there is no more famous saying in all Talmudic literature than that wherewith Beruriah, the wife of the great Rabbi Meïr, rebuked her angry husband: "It is the sins and not the sinners that are to perish from the earth."

IV

Coming to the practical details of conduct we find the tradition psychologically exacting and full of a surprising moral delicacy. "Honesty must exist not only in the act but in word and thought. Your word must be sacred even if your adversary has no proofs to produce." But the sages are not content with generalizations. They go into those details of life in which kindness and good breeding, considerateness and sincerity are inseparable: "Do not invite a man to your table knowing that he cannot accept; offer no presents knowing they will be refused; feign not to broach a new keg of wine for your guest when in fact you would have done so without him; offer not an empty flagon under

the pretence that it holds fragrant oil." In other words, "it is forbidden to gain by false pretence the good will of any man, even of an idolater." There is no detail too humble nor any too intimate for the tradition to touch upon and I can think of no more exquisite sayings in all the ethical literature of mankind than these two simple ones from the tractate *Baba Mezia,* "The Middle Gate," and the tractate *Sukkah,* "Tabernacle," respectively: "Do not ask the price of an object when you have no intention of buying it." For, as the context shows, you will be embarrassing the merchant, your fellow man. And the other saying is: "When you have promised a present to a child, you must not forget to keep the promise, for if you do you will teach him to lie." Can one imagine this saying on the lips of either Seneca or Paul? The Jewish tradition has this constant note of human tenderness; it is a tradition of human mothers and fathers and children, neither of stoic aristocrats nor of souls afraid that they are metaphysically damned.

That we must love our neighbour as ourselves is, of course, written in Leviticus. The oral tradition is never tired of defining the character of this love in action. Its character involves, according to the sages, a scrupulous regard for the feelings of others and abstention from judging. Thus we read that "in three respects love is greater than alms. Alms require only money, love demands the giving of the self; alms are only for the poor, the rich need love as well. You can give alms only to the living, but loving-kindness even to the dead." Alms, moreover, should "be given with delicacy. For it is not written: 'Blessed is he that giveth to the poor' (Psalm 41:1), but 'Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor.'"

In these matters, too, the sages do not scorn the humble details of daily life. "If a man owes you money and cannot possibly pay it, avoid passing before him." And again: "Take care not to wound the self-esteem of your servant. He was given you to serve you, not that you should amuse yourself by humiliating him." These are but a few of hundreds of discussions, sentences and apologues that drive home the same point. I shall add but one quotation more on account of the interesting self-disciplinary principle involved. "If your friend ask of you the good deed, the *mitzvah,* of helping him unload his beast (which is suffering under the heavy load) and your enemy begs you at the same time to help him load his beast (which is resting) go first to the aid of your enemy, in order to curb your *yetzero,* your primal, uncivilized passion." Can the Gospel, except for its exquisite persuasiveness of speech, match that?

The Christian command not to judge is, of course, a Jewish command and antedates Christianity by centuries. Of many specific applications of the command one of the happiest in tone is this: "If you see a learned and pious man commit a sin on a night, think of it no more on the morrow. Perhaps he has repented. Nay, to say so is not enough. He has surely known penitence." But what is true of the learned is equally true of the simple and the inclusive principle is this: "Judge every man according to his better self, literally, according to that scale which holds his merits." Upon this point the sages are uncompromising and declare that whoever invokes God's judgment against his neighbour will be the first to be punished, irrespective of the merits of the case. It follows from all this that the so-called

Christian gentleman of Anglo-American tradition is a Jewish gentleman. He is not knightly in the Nordic, pagan, belligerent sense. He is never truculent; his great aim is to spare his neighbour shame and pain; he is commanded by the sages to "let his language and his relations with his neighbour always be gentle and gracious." His character is defined once and for all in the tractate *Kiddushin,* "Sanctifications": "If two men quarrel, watch him who gives in and is silent first. You may be sure that he is of gentler birth than the other."

The tradition is practical. Its chief aim is to establish peace through love. But let it not be supposed that it lacks the contemplative note or the note of severity. It matches the *Imitation of Christ* on its own ground. One recalls the third chapter of the first book with its grave inner music: "Sic te in omni facto et cogitatu deberes tenere, quasi statim esses mortiturus." And now hear the Rabbi Eliezer in the tractate concerning the Sabbath: "Amend thy ways on the eve of thy death. But can I know when that eve cometh? Truly, thou canst not. And since thou knowest not the day of thy death and art never sure of living till the morrow, it follows that thou must amend thy ways each day." That is the contemplative note, and we find the note of ultimate severity, too, as in this passage of the *Midrash,* or commentary on Genesis: "It is written in the books of the Chronicles: 'Our days on earth are as a shadow and there is no hope.' If only we were like the shadow of a wall or a tree that lasts for a little. But we are like the fugitive shadow of a passing bird."

I have spoken, a definitely religious-minded reader may

object, exclusively of the tradition in respect of the duties of man to man. Has the Talmud so little to say of man's relation to the divine? Well, the sages were no theologians. They loved their God and trusted him. He is more placable than man, they declare, and more merciful and, by implication, more understanding. The saying that the penitence of the Day of Atonement suffices to reconcile one with God but not with man unless one has undone one's wrongs—that saying cuts deep. God, "He who is at the centre burns with love," we read in a Midrashic passage, and we know that the *shechinah,* the breath and spirit of God's glory, dwells where love and peace are. Therefore to practise love and establish peace is to enhance and spread the glory of God. In the Jewish conception of God justice and love are not divided. But this conception is not always strictly adhered to amid the practical problems of mortality. From the point of view of these problems God is love and "woe to the wicked who force the God of mercy to act as though he were cruel." But even under such circumstances the tradition will not admit that God's love is lessened and proceeds to establish a basis for its instinctive faith by an interpretative process: "It hath been taught: it is written: (Psalms 7:11) 'God hath indignation every day.' How long doth his indignation last? One *rega* (moment). And how long is a *rega?* The 58,888th part of an hour. And whence do we infer that he is indignant for a *rega?* Because it has been said (Psalms 30:5): 'His anger is but for a *rega,* his favour is for a lifetime.'" Intellectually this is, of course, puerile enough. It illustrates how the pilpulism, the hair-splitting, of the dryer portions of the Talmud is often subservient to far higher

and nobler instincts and monitions than appears to a prejudiced or hostile mind. The sages prefer, upon the whole, to connect God with ethical rather than with metaphysical concepts. "The name of God himself is peace. . . . God has created nothing fairer than peace. . . . Peace is as important in God's eyes as the very existence of the universe. . . . The seal of God is truth." Such sentences could be multiplied quite indefinitely and were perfectly present to the mind of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, for instance, when he said: "The world is supported by three things, justice, truth, peace." God *is* justice, truth, peace. The more justice, truth, peace in the world, the more God will there be in the universe. . . . No, this is no modern subtlety of mine. It is implicit in the tradition of that continuous revelation of Israel within which man's business is to sanctify the Ineffable Name by what he is and does and by his inner oneness to create the transcendent oneness between God and his world. . . . The emphasis of Judaism is on earth not on heaven. On earth the drama is played and its essence, like that of our little make-believe plays, is action. Hence the sages always come back to the deed, the human deed, that reconciles man and the universe. "If a man teaches Torah to the son of an *am ha'aretz,* God for that man's sake revokes a doom." It is not the substance of this sentence that is of the highest importance, but its form of thought. The Jewish life is to be, both in a cosmic and an earthly sense, a creative life. It is to create goodness, happiness, a unified world of the spirit and at last the Messianic age. No heavenly kingdom, but an earthly one. "The prophets, predicting marvels of the future, had in mind only the

Messianic age. For the world to come is a mystery that no man can pierce."

V

In my early, assimilatory youth that was so strongly tinged with Christianity I read the Gospels with a ready-made reverence and belief. My assent to Christology was never complete. But I did not dream of doubting, even when I came to know of the lateness of the composition of the Gospel narratives, either the newness and uniqueness or the transcendent quality of their ethical and spiritual revelation. I soon knew that one must probably reject Trinitarian Christianity on scientific grounds. I was never so lost as not to honour the instinctive aversion from Christianity of Jews on account of the sufferings and persecution of our people. I never dreamed—how many Americans, Gentile or Jewish, do?—that the Gospels read in the void, as we read them, are a pure fiction to our minds and that Jewish history and Jewish literature—an extant and not wholly inaccessible literature—establish the substance of the Gospel narratives within an order of intellectual and religious development in which they assume a completely different aspect. Hence my attitude to Jesus has undergone three phases. The first or liberal Christian phase needs no definition; the second was the liberal Jewish phase: let bygones be bygones and let us accept Jesus among the great teachers. Today, after some years of study I know that the Jesus represented in the Gospels was a notable spiritual personality, a master of human speech at its simplest and highest,

but as a teacher neither original nor important. His positive ethics are the ethics of the Jewish oral tradition as it existed in some form from the days of Ezra on and had already been wrought to an ultimate sweetness and humanity by Hillel and his school; the controversial sayings attributed to Jesus rest upon his large margin of ignorance of the great tradition of his people. For informing himself better he substituted, as Travers Herford points out, an uninquiring anger that neither loves one's enemy nor turns the other cheek. Of course we know Jesus only through the Gospels, which are late and distinctly anti-Jewish and controversial. But it is the Jesus of the Gospels that the world has in its mind and conscience. And this Jew has not deeply touched the world. What has moved men and founded empires and destroyed them again is the Christ myth with its great metaphysical drama of original sin and the vicarious atonement and heaven and salvation. But modern liberals turn from that high exercise of the mythopœic faculty to the Jesus of the Gospels, to the carpenter's son of Nazareth. And they ask: what of him? The answer is to be found in the records of his people in his age; it is to be found there by any student, even by so ill-equipped a one as I am, of the Rabbinical tradition and literature.

By the light of that knowledge the synoptic Gospels paint a picture which not the dullest eye can miss:

Jesus was an observant Jew.

There are contradictions. There is his controversy with the Pharisees concerning the washing of hands (Matthew 15:20). But so soon as the authors of the Gospels mention those Jews who preserved both the law and the traditions

of Israel across the ages, they lose their heads and plunge into contradiction. Thus Matthew records Jesus' criticism of the law, but also the famous words (5:18) "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah." . . . It is the oldest Gospel, that of Mark, which takes the Jewishness of Jesus most profoundly for granted (12:29): "First of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." What have the Trinitarians done with that saying? Jesus declared the Unity. The *Sh'ma Israel* of the ages was on his lips. . . . And that last mystical supper was in fact (Matthew 26:17) the first evening of the Passover, the *Seder* evening, which Jesus celebrated with his friends. Were it not for the furious anti-Jewishness of the militant early Church from which the Gospels sprang, we might have had record of his using some legend or ritual, some *Haggadah shel Pesach* wherewith to celebrate the feast of his people. . . . He came to die and on his lips was that cry from the twenty-second psalm: *Éli, Éli, lama sabachtani,* which had been the cry of the distressed Jewish soul for ages and was to be the cry of that soul for many ages more even to that noble Yiddish chant: *"Éli, Éli, lama sabachtani,* Mit Feier un Flamm hot men uns gebrennt. . . ." Let us remember that the Church came after Jesus. This Jew died at the hands of the Romans a conscious martyr among the martyrs of Israel. . . .

He was a Galilean *am ha'aretz.* He was an unlearned man in the technical sense, a countryman. It was a Sadducean Sanhedrin, or chief council, that declared him a blasphemer. He disliked and fought the Pharisees. He was tried, condemned and executed by a Roman court—not *"under* Pon-

tius Pilate" as the disingenuous creeds have it; "he was sent to his doom *by* the Procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius," as we read in the Annals of Tacitus: "Christus Tiberio imperitante *per* procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat." . . . He dwelt, like many Galileans, apart from both of the dominant sects, from the Sadducees who were soon to dwindle and have no influence on the future and from the Pharisees who had already begun to gather the great tradition and were later to write it down and from among whom, even after the name had all but perished, were to come the sages and martyrs of Israel. . . . He dwelt apart from both and we have no record of him in any teacher's house. But he was set off from his fellow peasants and mechanics of Galilee by the accident of genius. Lovely and characteristically Jewish is the story told by Luke (2:42-46) of the precocious child escaping his parents and wandering into the synagogue that had been established in the Temple in order to dispute with the doctors of the law. . . . During the unrecorded years he dreamed and listened to the words of men and heard enough of the oral tradition as it went from lip to lip even in the Galilean villages to make its ethic the substance of his teaching. But his knowledge was partial and unsystematic and harsh sayings in the Torah wounded his sensitive poetic soul and he did not know that *halakoth,* interpretative decisions concerning the holy way, already existed that dealt with all of his difficulties. Thus he began his ministry as a poetic, ill-instructed, highly personal and, in one important respect, abnormal young reformer. . . . There was nothing in the way of his teaching. The laicizing of Judaism

had begun, as I have pointed out, long before the fall of the Temple. Hence (Mark 6:2) "when the Sabbath day was come he began to teach in the synagogue." And next (Matthew 4:33) he "went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues." Whenever he went home to Nazareth (Luke 4:16) "as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read." He probably read the appointed Torah of the day, thus uniting religious observance with teaching. In brief, he became an itinerant *maggid* (exhorter), a very Jewish calling which exists to this day. . . . He taught, then and later, the ethics of his people, expressing the *halakoth* which he had heard with a fresh persuasiveness and beauty, adding through apologue and parable *haggadoth,* interpretative imaginative comments, like an hundred other *chachamin,* or wise men, in Israel before him and after him. . . . That great body of his sayings known as the Sermon on the Mount represents, as my quotations from the Talmud have shown, the pure traditional ethics of Judaism. Where Jesus attacks the religion of the fathers, he does so because he did not know the oral tradition fully. He uses the formula: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . ." and quotes the written law or Torah. He then uses the second part of his formula: "But I say unto you . . ." and in each case but one teaches what had already long been taught, namely, that all violence partakes of murder, that yea, yea and nay, nay are better than swearing, that the law of revenge (*lex talionis*) must be abandoned. Once he misquotes even the written law which he knew. For the

command "hate thine enemy" is not to be found in it at all and the Jewish ethic, as I have shown, is from of old an ethic of mercy, of love, of the strictest obligation neither to judge one's neighbour nor to put him to shame. His very figures of speech are those familiar to the Jewish imagination of the ages, as that concerning the laying up of treasures in heaven which we find in the Talmudic legend concerning a king who spent all his substance in time of famine to help his people and, being accused of prodigality, replied: "My ancestors laid up treasures on earth; I lay mine up in heaven. My ancestors laid up their treasure in a place that is full of danger but I lay up mine where it is forever safe." (Tractate of *Baba Batra,* "The Last Gate.") . . .

Why was he so bitter against the scribes and Pharisees—the *Soferim* who, from the time of Ezra on, had been the learned interpreters and humanizers of the religion of Israel, and the *Perushim,* the "separated ones," who sought by both strictness and righteousness, by nonresistance and peace to preserve the spiritual nationhood of Israel under the oppression of the strangers. It was largely, doubtless, because Jesus did not, as I have pointed out, know the teachings of the tradition well; and partly it may have been that the young idealist from Galilee, the villager, resented the learned and subtle people of cities and councils. But it may also have been that he had had unfortunate personal encounters with hypocritical individuals that prejudiced him so bitterly. For of course the Pharisees being human counted among them their quota of the shallow and the insincere.

Nor is their own tradition unconscious of that fact, as is radiantly clear from two Talmudic passages which Travers Herford missed in his notable defence of the Pharisees. In the important first tractate of *Berakot,* "Praises," we read: "He who lifts up his voice too loud in prayer is a man of little faith and a prophet of untruth—*m'nebiei hasheker.*" And in the tractate of *Sota,* "Faithless Woman," occurs this significant passage: "The senselessly pious man and the subtle rogue and the bigoted woman and a certain kind of Pharisee are the ruin of the world." And the words for bigoted woman in the text are *ishah peroshah*—Pharisean woman. Yes, the Pharisees were human and were critical enough of themselves and yet produced at their best the saints and sages who by their lives and words creatively passed the Hebraic tradition down the ages. But if we look yet more closely at the passage from the *Mishna* of the tractate *Sota* which I have just quoted, we may come at once upon the temperamental difference—stronger than any other difference—which forever divided Jesus not only from the Pharisees but from the normal life and aspirations of his people. For the colourless words "and a certain kind of Pharisee" which I put down only for the moment are in the text: *"v'makkoth Perushim."* And *makkoth* means stripes, flayings, macerations or they who through false piety inflict stripes upon themselves. In a word, it is the morbid ascetic, the contemner of life and nature who, according to the Talmud, is the ruin of the world. . . .

I have said that in the controversial passages of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught, in every case but one, what

was already taught and received. The exceptional case is his teaching concerning marriage and divorce which he repeated and strengthened later (Matthew 19:7-9) by the comment that Moses permitted divorce to the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts. Here, at once, we have two ways of life that are forever irreconcilable: that of the ascetic to whom both the flesh and love and its fruits are ugly and unimportant and to be done with and huddled out of sight once and for all, and the way of the non-ascetic who sees in love romance and poetry and joy and in procreation an earnest of immortality and who therefore aspires in this fundamental relation of life after perfection and the right to the quest after perfection. . . . But what did Jesus, virgin according to the Gospels and all Christian tradition, know of that? He led that celibate life which the Talmud calls a death in life and an impious life. He had no first-born to offer unto God, no wife to honour and so no pieties to observe. He missed, according to the Jews, all the significant sanctities; he must have seemed to them mad and dangerous if they heard those portentous words (Matthew 19:12) concerning "eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake"—especially dangerous at that historic moment to an oppressed and decimated nation which conceived of itself as holding a last citadel of human righteousness in a degenerate and pagan world. . . . In the asceticism of Jesus lay his most fundamental temperamental difference from the great majority of Jews who, unlike the pagans, having gone to no unbridled excesses needed no spur in their sides. But an-

other profound difference that separated him from his people was his moral pessimism. To the Jew the way that leadeth to destruction is not so wide nor the way which leadeth unto life so narrow. His sages have taught that he must in very truth not judge or condemn, that every human soul has its case, its residuum of good, its power—an ever living power—of reconciliation with both man and God. . . . And lastly there was and is between Jesus and the Jews a grave intellectual difference. He accused the Pharisees "of making the word of God of none effect through" their tradition (Mark 7:13), meaning, of course, the oral tradition, the *Halakah* with which he was so imperfectly acquainted. But precisely what the Jews rejected then and now is the concept of a rigid, finished, static word of God. Through the tradition the flexible word of God changes and lives on. But it cannot be suddenly fixed in one mould by any single person teaching "as one having authority" and opposing to experience and wisdom, to sage and council, to life and its manifold teachings a sudden, mystical, unanswerable "But *I* say unto you . . ."

Let me sum up this important matter. To the Jew of all ages, the reasonably instructed Jew, the teaching of Jesus falls cleanly and immediately into two parts: the far greater part which restates with an incomparable spiritual sweetness and poetic persuasiveness the traditional ethics which Jesus, the Jew, received from his Jewish predecessors and which is therefore true but not new; the smaller part which, expressing his ascetic condemnation of human life, his moral pessimism, his assumption of a mystical and supra-human authority, the Jew rejects at once with every

instinct of his heart and mind as both impossible practically and philosophically absurd. . . .

VI

How deep and immemorial are the prejudices that I have touched! Perhaps all my quotations from the doctors and sages of Israel have not yet sufficed to prove that the ethics of Jesus to which the modern world feigns to cling are the ethics of Judaism and that all in his teaching that enlightened men now reject—the asceticism, the moral pessimism, the claim to divine authority—is precisely what Jews have always rejected. . . . But the Talmud is infinite. It is like a sea. And even I who know so little have not yet come to the end of that little knowledge. . . . From an eminence Jesus preached his Sermon on the Mount. . . . Close to the warm heart and needs of humanity I shall let our sages preach a Sermon in the Plain:

> Those who endure evil without returning wrong for wrong,
> Who hear insults and answer not,
> Who do good in a spirit of love and accept suffering in a spirit of glad resignation——
> of such the scripture has said: Let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.
> Learn therefore to suffer with patience and to forgive injuries.
> For loving-kindness is worth more than all sacrifices.

It is better to be among the persecuted than among the persecutors,
to be the accursed than he who curses.
For what saves the world is the humility of those whose lips are closed when men revile them.
Judge not thy neighbour till thou hast been in his position.
Despise no man and hold nothing to be impossible. For there is no man but will have his hour, no thing but will have its place.
He who judges his neighbour with indulgence will find indulgence in his turn.
And with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.
Forgive and God will forgive thee.
If thou hast done a small wrong to thy neighbour, let it seem great in thine eyes;
if thou hast done him a great kindness, let it seem of little account to thee.
But if thy neighbour have rendered thee a small service, hold it to be of great import;
and if he have done thee a great wrong, say in thy heart that it is but a little thing.
Let thy yea be holy, let thy nay be holy; let thy mouth not utter the contrary of thy thought.
Blessed be God each day for the daily bread he gives us.
Though at the last judgment there appeared nine hundred and ninety and nine accusers against a man and but one defender, yet shall that man be saved.

And who are the defenders of man? Good works and penitence.

Do you respect each the other.

Respect every man.

He who suspects his neighbour wrongfully incurs a punishment.

He who lifts his hand against his neighbour, though he strike him not, merits the name of *rasha,* of evil-doer.

He who makes his neighbour to blush before men is like unto a murderer.

Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have others do unto thee. That is the whole law. The rest is commentary.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. That, said the Rabbi Akiba, is the great principle of the Torah.

Wouldst thou glorify God? Seek to be like him—just, loving, compassionate, merciful.

What shall a man do to live? He shall die unto life. And what shall he do to die? Let him cling to life.

The Sabbath is given to you; but ye, ye are not given unto the Sabbath.

The reward of a good deed is in itself and in itself likewise is the reward of an evil deed.

If I handle the sword I cannot cultivate wisdom; if I am busy gaining wisdom I cannot touch the sword.

My abasement shall be my exaltation and my exaltation shall be my abasement.

If the arrow-smith is slain by an arrow, he is punished by the work of his hands.

A single just man suffices to save the world,

and were there but one just man the universe would deserve to have been created for his sake.

All love that depends upon a transitory thing—when that thing ceases, love ceases. But love that is dependent on no earthly thing shall never die.

Truth remains, untruth perishes.

The blessing of the Holy One is Peace.

VII

The ethos that speaks in this Sermon in the Plain has never allied itself with any questionable doctrine. Christianity as a historical religion is rigidly exclusive. To partake of its blessings a man has to accept the doctrine of original sin without which the atonement of the God-man Christ loses its meaning; he has to accept an intricate cosmological and metaphysical system. If he does not he is damned, be he Jewish sage or Buddhist saint or Thomas Jefferson or even Wolfgang von Goethe. He is damned to hellfire. A religion so lacking in natural catholicity but inspired by its human founder's Jewish concern for one's fellow man had necessarily to be a tirelessly proselytizing religion. Sensitive men and women could in no age endure the thought that the far greater portion of mankind would perish eternally for want of the opportunity to accept Christ as its Saviour, and the Fundamentalist is still very properly intent upon the evangelization of the world.

The Jewish religion, though it has had its periods of mild proselytizing, has never had to be, like either Mohammedanism or Christianity, a missionary religion. For since it

does not hold man and nature to be corrupt, it does not consider men damned automatically and thus in need of a specific nostrum of metaphysical salvation. To become a Jew, which is as much a matter of nationality as of religion, of naturalization as of custom and belief, the non-Jew must undergo ceremonies and tests. But it is not necessary to be a Jew in order to be saved or, in the Jewish phrase, to be a partaker either of the Messianic age or of the world to come. It is merely necessary to be righteous, to be a bringer of peace.

Among the Jews themselves the highest authorities have always insisted on ethical distinctions, rather than on those of either ceremonial or belief. It was Hillel who said: "Be like the pupils of Aaron, loving peace, ever in quest of peace, loving men and thus bringing them near to the Torah." It was Rabbi Jehuda, the Patriarch, who declared: "He who is merciful to his fellow men is descended from Abraham; those who are not merciful to their fellow men are certainly not of his blood." And it is precisely these distinctions that illuminate and fix the quality of Israel's sense of election, of being a chosen people. "'And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests' (Exodus 19:6). One might think here there is meant," we read in a Midrashic passage, "the kingdom of a king who sets out to conquer! Therefore it says 'of priests' who are to hold themselves free for the service of God and man." And the Talmud asks: "Why was the Torah given to Israel? Because it is a strong people." Yes, the Israelites must be a strong people in order to obey the command to be among men the merciful

(*harachmim*), the humble (*habyishanim*), the charitable (*hasidim*). And to be that is to be an Israelite. . . .

Judaism is a religion of mercy both in practice and in theory. And mercy is not exclusive. "To wrong a stranger (*ger*) is like wronging God." That is the command for a land or a homogeneous community of Israel. For the mixed populations of the dispersion this is the command: "In a city in which Gentiles and Israelites dwell together, both Jewish and Gentile overseers of the poor are to be appointed and these are to gather contributions from Gentiles and Israelites and one is to feed the poor of the Gentiles even as those of the Israelites and to visit their sick and to bury their dead and to comfort the afflicted among them as one comforts those of Israel, and one is to give marriage-portions to their brides as to one's own for the sake of the ways of peace." Such is now, as it has always been, the practice of Israel. The statement of the high and merciful inclusiveness of its religious theory strikes the ultimately characteristic note: "We read in Isaiah (26:2): 'Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth faith may enter in.' The prophet does not say: that the priests or the Levites or the Israelites shall enter in, but the righteous and faithful nation, whatever its blood. . . . And again we read (Psalm, 118:20): 'This is the gate of Jahve; the righteous shall enter into it.' It is not written the priests or the Levites or the Israelites, but the righteous. . . . Once more the Psalmist says (33:1): 'Rejoice in Jahve, O ye righteous,' and it is not to the Israelites alone that he issues the call, but to the just of all peoples. . . . And hear the Psalmist at last (125:4): 'Do good, O Jahve, unto those who are good.'

He prays God to do good not unto the priests or the Levites or the Israelites, but unto the good and loving of heart. . . . Whence it follows that a virtuous Gentile has as much merit as a high-priest and descendant of Aaron, that he who abjures idolatry is to be considered as a Jew and a confessor of our teaching and that the righteous of all peoples have a share in the world to come."

Jewish nationality is exclusive like every other nationality; the religion of Israel is, in spirit and outlook, in theory and practice, a universal religion. . . .

VIII

At last I dare to say what I have long wanted to say in strong plain words: The Jewish problem is the decisive problem of Western civilization. By its solution this world of the West will stand or fall, choose death or life. But it is not the Jew's problem; it is the Gentile's. The wound is not in our side, O Gentiles whom we love, whose world we love and live in and would help to save—it is in yours. . . . For consider once more the deepest strain in your history. You were turned from your paganism not by the Jew Jesus who proclaimed the ethics of the fathers, but by your Hellenizing apostle who, from the un-Jewish notes in the character of Jesus—his asceticism, his moral pessimism, his assumption of superhuman authority—built up the religion of Christ. In the sign of the Cross in which Constantine conquered, you conquered the world. But evil you could not conquer; peace you could not gain. The history of Christendom is a history of warring sects and warring na-

tions, of cruelty, of hatred and of slaughter. The Papacy stamped out the Albigenses and Calvin burned Servetus at the stake and the horrors of persecution in all ages to the Czarist Russia of yesterday and the man-whippers of Georgia and Texas of today are one of the blackest pages in all the history of mankind. You persecuted and made war and hated in the name of Christ and of his Church. You would not have dared to do so in the name of Jesus, the teacher of the Jewish tradition. . . . No, this is not a complete picture of your civilization. For you are the most gifted of all the peoples of the earth, you Germanic and Latin peoples, and all through the horrors of your moral dualism stamped on your souls by Paul, and through all your infamous cruelties perpetrated through persecution and through war, you produced beauty in word and marble and music and, from the return of Hellenism to you in the Renaissance on, knowledge and worldly wisdom that have seemed to make men to attain the stature of gods. . . . You have all beauty—how poor are we Jews in that compared to you! You have all knowledge. You have no gift for righteousness, for humanity, for peace. And the result is that with all your beauty, your Shakespeare and your Beethoven, and with all your knowledge and with your unimaginable inventions wherewith you transmute into miracles the substance of the ancient earth and sail the air as though it were a lake, you lapsed in this high noon of time in your World War into the foulest barbarism of the ages, slaughtering and being slaughtered like the beasts of the jungle, blackening each others' souls with insensate lies like savage children and gravely recording these stupid lies

in your amusingly solemn pacts and covenants. And you go on and on manufacturing your engines of war and your poison gases and fomenting your foolish hatreds and rivalries and strutting truculently before each others' eyes, careless, apparently, whether by barbarous catastrophes yet unheard of you destroy this marvellous civilization which you have builded with your gifts. You act like brilliant but evil children. And still, though at last with a tremor of misgiving, you invoke your Christ. . . . Have you ever thought upon the Jew Jesus and his Jewish teachings concerning righteousness and peace? Oh, yes, he has always been an obscure sting and fret at the core of your consciousness. From earliest ages on you have accused the heretic and dissenter of "Judaizing" and all reformers who were frightened of the pagan pomp and power and cruelty of Christianity were indeed "Judaizers," though imperfect ones, and it is no wonder that the Inquisition was busier with no charge than with this charge and crime of "Judaizing." Jesus always troubled your conscience. And so by a symbolical identification the Jew troubled your conscience too and you made us outcasts to bear witness for your mystical Christ against our troubling Jesus, and harried us and burned us and slew us and are still doing it to this day in order to vindicate the Christ of your pagan barbarism against the Jewish Jesus who knocks at your hearts in vain. That we crucified Christ is an old wives' tale. For Christ is a myth. That you have crucified Jesus and his Jewish righteousness through us day by day for innumerable generations is the central fact of history. . . . It is not, I repeat, our problem. It is yours. Will you continue to judge and

hate and compete and then kill with engines ever more madly formidable? Will you continue to corrupt your moral lives with the sickly and groundless asceticism of Paul? Or will you reject at last your pagan Churches and your belligerent nationalisms and save the beauty and the wisdom that you have wrought by a turning toward that eternal Hebraic ethos in which the sayings that Jesus received from his teachers are but as a graceful eddy in a great river? You have all gifts, all graces, all genius. We have the secret of righteousness. . . . And the choice is yours. . . . I have said that the future of civilization needs a new synthesis of Hellenism and Hebraism, of nature and of spirit, of knowledge and righteousness. . . . Is it not true? Is it not the chief task to which the friends of mankind, of whatever blood, should address themselves?

Epilogue

IT IS winter again and Paris lies steeped in a grey fog with faint yellow glints in it. Although it is morning the electric light is lit in my study, which Thelma's exquisite touch has made perhaps a more fitting place for creative work and high meditation than I deserve. Once more a task is finished. What of that task? Not ten minutes' walk from my study is the Carrefour of Montparnasse, which my friend Sisley Huddleston calls the cross-road of the world. The cafés are thronged with the young writers and artists of all countries and in words or paint or clay they weave patterns and most of these patterns have the aim of being hard and bright and novel, astonishing and complete in themselves. But they must weave their patterns according to some principle; the design did not just happen; it was guided. The inner guiding principle of any artistic pattern is the artist's self, of course. It is the man behind the work that counts. He cannot put into his work more than he has in himself; he is lucky enough if he can get into it even a portion of his inner stock. Well, I cannot weave these hard bright patterns; I could not if I would. For art is not enough on this confused earth under these silent skies. The inextinguishable flame of mankind's hopes and needs and fears and sufferings burns in me, burns through me and is a part of my very self. That is the justification of my task, however well or ill it has been done, the justification of recounting in a second volume the history of a life and mind never isolated, never unaware of

the other lives and minds that throng the world. . . . It has been said that the autobiographic impulse is, at its deepest, an other-regarding, and in the highest sense a pedagogic instinct. Rightly understood these words tell the story. I speak of myself, of my not quite common fate, of the history of a mind not at least unscrupulous. I speak of myself. But what, beyond myself, I am always thinking of is what old Whitman called

"the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and freedom of the race."

That is Jewish. It is American too. It was, at least, American once. And I can think of many men and women in the strong sunlight of America in whom that tradition and that spirit are still alive. To them, to such, I send my greeting from this soft, twilit city. . . . I shall not soon speak to them of myself and in my own person again. For the stories that I have long wanted to write are knocking at my mind and people come streaming in—people of several countries and even of several ages, shadowy people whose soft and ghostlike clamour seems to pray for at least the mimic resurrection that art can give.